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THE RENAISSANCE IN EUROPE
(1400-1600)

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Keeper of the London Museum.

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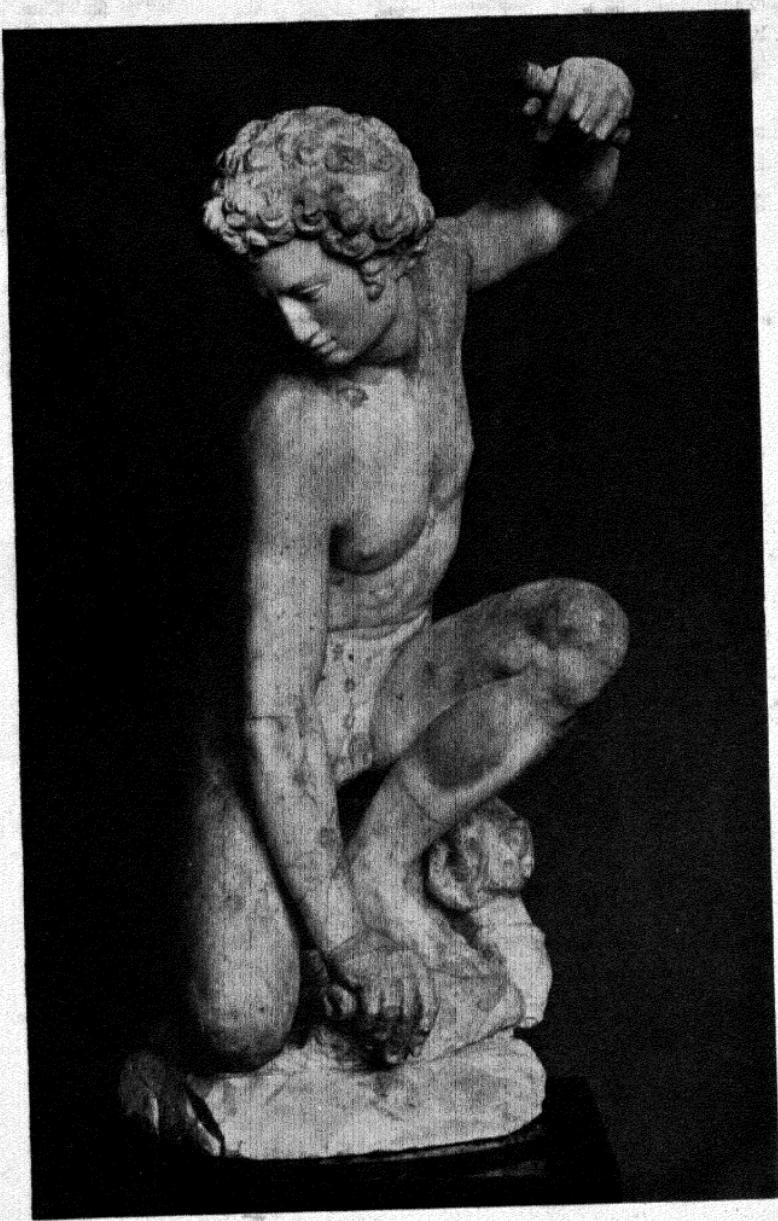
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CUPID
Michelangelo. Victoria & Albert Museum

THE RENAISSANCE
IN EUROPE
(1400-1600)

BY

TRENCHARD COX

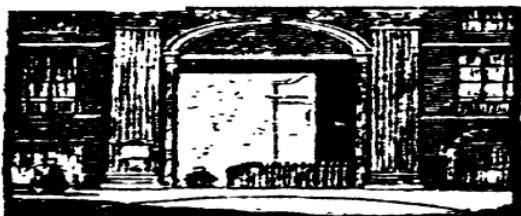
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PREFACE

THE design of this book needs explanation. Its aim is to trace a history of the European Renaissance with examples taken exclusively from works of art in London Museums and Art Galleries, where any member of the London public can see them for himself, without the cost of a ticket to the Continent.

A pretext, however, must immediately be made for the many omissions. To adjust such an extensive and infinitely various subject as the Renaissance to the confines of a single volume, discipline must be made the consort of enthusiasm, and limits in date must strictly be observed. My choice, therefore, of 1400-1600 as the cardinal points in my history, though it has given me the play of two entire centuries, has prevented me from discussing any artists of a later date—for example Caravaggio, Rubens, Rembrandt or Velazquez, who, even though they do not coincide with the true Renaissance era, were the Renaissance afterbirth. For a different reason, however, than lack of space England has been omitted from this book, since the Renaissance, as it affected our own country, will form the subject of a separate volume of this present series.

To the ~~curators~~^{keepers} of the various Museums, who have permitted ~~me~~ to reproduce the treasures in their care my sincere thanks are due. But my personal gratitude is most warmly offered to Miss Beatrice Goldsmid, for the great encouragement which she gave to the work through each successive stage of its formation

and to Mrs. Margaret Parkinson for her flawless typing of many a garbled manuscript. To the help of these two kind friends much of the pleasure, which has accompanied the making of this book, is due.

T. C.

BLAKENEY, NORFOLK

Christmas, 1932

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INTRODUCTION

THE RENAISSANCE MOVEMENT

THE outbreak of the human spirit, which we call the Renaissance, found its symbol and epitome in Michelangelo, whose art was the complete expression of a time when human nature was enriched with a fresh and glorious dignity, and a new age was begun. The gigantic, exultant figures which people the Michelangelesque panorama are symbolic of the reawakening of the consciousness of Man to the wonders of the Universe ; their Olympian beauty and unashamed nakedness epitomize a care for physical perfection ; their arms, outstretched, embrace the advent of a new life which, in the fullness of its experience, would burst the bonds so long imposed by the stern religious system of the Middle Ages upon the heart and imagination.

A concise definition of the complex, many-sided movement known as the Renaissance would be superficial and misleading ; it is, indeed, impossible to sum up a vast and unprecedented movement in a smart, succinct phrase of a few words. The Renaissance was hardly an historical event, but a rare phenomenon of nature in which the intellectual possibilities of Man were marvellously revealed. The movement, which began slowly, spread gradually over Western Europe and reached its height between the years 1400 and 1600, dates which can be considered the Pillars of Hercules in the history of its duration.

The external causes to which the Renaissance has been ascribed are well known and often quoted, and, even in the light of the new opinion which considers the Renaissance to have been the result of a gradual tendency rather than a sudden efflorescence, they remain unquestioned. Perhaps the Black Death, which ravaged Europe and the

Far East in the fourteenth century, rang the final tocsin to Mankind, warning them to forgo their old-time ignorance and to pit a new knowledge against the dark powers of nature. The enfeeblement, too, of Feudalism had replaced authority by a cult of the individual, thereby reshuffling the social order. Finally, the fall of Constantinople, in 1453 into the hands of the Turks, marked the cataclysm of the Greek Empire and scattered Greek scholars, like a flight of doves, to bring the message of ancient Hellas to the notice of the Western world. From Constantinople, moreover, shiploads of looted manuscripts and sculptures found their way to Italy, adding stimulus to the immeasurable intellectual change effected by the discovery of printing, and the consequent dissemination of books and new ideas. Fresh sciences and new worlds were also discovered. The Copernican astronomical system took the place of the Ptolemaic, thus changing Man's conception of the Universe, whilst the discovery of America and the routes to the Far East opened up a glimpse of international possibilities in trade.¹

Among European countries, Italy, being in closest contact with the classical world, was the first to awaken to the new thought. The preparation for the event had been long, but, at the emergence of the fourteenth century into the fifteenth, the renascent feeling was established. A great desire for knowledge then swooped down, like a giant eagle, upon the cities of Italy. Precious manuscripts were discovered in unheard-of monasteries, far from the beaten track ; the works of ancient poets and philosophers

¹ The great explorers of the Renaissance epoch were Columbus (1492); Sebastian Cabot (1497, 1499, 1526); Vasco da Gama, who made India by the Cape of Good Hope (1497-8); Vespucci, who crossed the Atlantic (1499) and Magellan, a Portuguese sailor who, in 1519, coasted to the southernmost point of South America. Later, in England, Drake and Hawkins contributed to the list of marine adventurers by their prowess at sea.

were published and widely read ; and scholars, like travellers and scientists, became adventurous and navigated uncharted seas of philosophy and thought.

Chemistry and physics were among the chief pre-occupations of advanced minds. Copernicus, in 1507, startled the world by his proclamation that the earth was not the pivot of the Universe, but only a grain of sand revolving in limitless space ; Galileo (1564-1642), by the manufacture of the telescope, opened the eyes of the world to the wonders of the starry firmament. In England, too, Dr. Gilbert of Colchester (1540-1603) propounded the theory of magnetism ; Harvey (1578-1657) demonstrated the circulation of the blood ; and Newton (1642-1727) assaulted contemporary thought by his formulation of the laws of gravity. France, moreover, did not lag behind in matters of science. In the sixteenth century, a group of Parisian surgeons and physicians, notably Ambroise Paré, the famous military surgeon, dealt the death-blow to the antiquated methods of medicine, which were based on sorcery and superstition rather than on knowledge and experiment.

The most significant revolution brought about by the revival of learning was the discovery of printing. In former time, when each work of literature had to be written out by scribes, circulation was slow and limited. Now, with the newly discovered art, the radius of *cognoscenti* was enlarged and learning became open to all. The first signs of printing were seen in Holland, where Coster, a scholar of Haarlem, was printing from movable type somewhere before 1446 ; but his methods and activities remained obscure. It was Gutenberg who dropped the first stone in the lake of knowledge by setting up a printing press in Mayence (1450). The ripples were not long in spreading. In 1474, William Caxton set up his press in London ; in 1494 the great Aldine Press in Venice came

into being, and the volumes of the ancients were rescued by Aldus Manutius and his collaborators from the dust of the former professional 'book-buriers' (*βιβλιοτάφοι*). In 1549, moreover, the famous Plantin House at Antwerp turned over a new chapter in the history of European book production.

For the purposes of this book it has been found best to take the dates of the Renaissance from 1400 to 1600, but it must be understood that these limits are arbitrary and cannot be taken as actual fact. The Renaissance movement had so many precursors, especially in the span of the fourteenth century, that it would be possible to date the first sign of its birth earlier by a hundred years than the limits set by us. But even before 1400 there were ominous symptoms of a pregnancy. The years 1079-1142 mark the life-time of the scholar-lover, Abélard, the great dialectician and the sworn enemy of pedantic rhetoricians; later, the Moslem heretic, Averroës (1120-98) reconstructed the true text of Aristotle out of the wreckage of the garbled version which had been presented to the world by the ignorant and prejudiced theologians of the early Middle Ages; whilst, in the following century, Thomas Aquinas (1225-74) attempted to rebuild theology upon a sounder basis of logic. In the same century, moreover, Dante (1265-1361) published his Comedy, the divine confession of his faith, which, beneath its medieval trappings of theology, concealed the work of an unique, progressive, individual mind.

In England, the spirit of freedom and audacity was making itself felt. Roger Bacon (1214-92) was imprisoned for combining free thought with Franciscan friardom. Later, Geoffrey Chaucer (1328-1400), beneath a guise of frivolous story-telling, launched his great satire against the hypocrisy of monastic asceticism; whilst Langland (c. 1332-1400), in *Piers Plowman*, became the people's

champion in his passionate crying for justice. Wycliffe of Oxford (c. 1320-84), too, had defied the authority of the Pope by translating the Bible into English and by questioning the efficacy of the Blessed Sacrament. His writings spread their influence even to Bohemia where John Huss was excommunicated in 1412 for delivering lectures based on the doctrine of the great Oxford teacher. In 1415 he was burnt alive for refusing to recant.

But, back in Italy, in the sphere of literature, Dante was followed by Petrarch (1304-74) and Boccaccio (1313-75), two complete partisans of the Renaissance, prematurely born. Petrarch, with his fine perception of the dignity of man as a rational, sentient being, born with a right to enjoy the earth which is his heritage, opened a new method in scholarship and revealed the spirit of humanism.

Boccaccio, though less soberly learned in ancient matters than Petrarch, occupies an equally prominent place in the history of the Revival through the new spirit he introduced into the popular literature. This star-lit dreamer of the senses and teller of risky tales recounted in the gardens of Florence by an elegant company of fair women and their luxurious loves, was the first to justify the pleasures of the flesh in the light of the amorous legends of antiquity.

But this premature manifestation of the Renaissance movement was merely the early morning, making ready for an iridescent day, in which a mystical marriage between the modern and ancient world was to be performed and men were to reawaken to the senses of art and learning. In its beginnings, the Renaissance was purely learned ; its interest was in the past, and its truest representative would have been a scholar in a furred hood and black gown, like Bracciolini or Valla. In the end, it broadened out into a full romanticism ; the past slipped back into its position of history ; the present was enjoyed for its own sake and

men arose, filled with a spontaneous vitality and consummate genius like Rabelais, Titian and Shakespeare.

The wheel of the Renaissance involved the whole of Europe in its sweeping movement ; and turn by turn every nation felt its weight. Italy was its first victim ; and she became the oracle to which all other countries went to sound the mighty problems of art and learning. France followed closely upon her heels, and the French kings in their travels and campaigns beyond the Alps found in Italy a new source of inspiration. Germany and England too, were less obtrusively Italy's debtors in their desire for art and culture. But in each country, the Renaissance took a different form and, although its essence was ever drawn from the long-stored wine chambers of the Classics, its vintage tasted different to the palate of each successive nation.

In Italy the epitome of the Renaissance was art ; in the North it was letters and religion ; and just as from Italy there streamed forth an incomparable flow of painting and sculpture, so from the North there burst forth an efflorescence of poetry, drama, and mysticism. In the South the later Renaissance was mainly pagan, whilst in the North it was less exuberant and tempered by religion. In France, it is true, the spirit of Italy was closely felt, since François I was a traveller in the South and—rarest of kingly unions—combined his kingship with an artist's vision. In Germany, however, the Renaissance was almost entirely intellectual, and in one sense was hardly a Renaissance at all, with its lack of pagan insouciance, its dearth of princely patrons, and its slaughtering sword of the Reformation. In Flanders the example of the Medici was more closely followed, with a lavish encouragement of artists by the Burgundian Dukes ; but in England Shakespeare was followed by the Puritans who, had it not been for Milton in whom Puritan ardour was cooled by a

sympathy with Renaissance culture, would have destroyed the arts and made a final war against beauty.

These differences of the Renaissance phenomenon will be the subject of subsequent chapters in this book, where it will be shown that even within the confines of a single country progress was not uniform. Italy, indeed, was the most complex land of all and, within her boundaries, Florence, Rome and Venice had each its own revival of culture and the arts.

In Italy the Renaissance movement reached its height by 1500 ; in France and England it did not mature until the middle of the sixteenth century and even afterwards. In other countries its climax came still later. But in every land its life was intense, though not everlasting, and it always died of an excess of zeal. Its blazing emotionalism flamed too brightly in the end and scorched the wings of proportion and intelligence ; its enthusiasm, too, which had started so divinely, either sank into artificiality or dwindled into pedantry, making decadence inevitable. But even its decay was not without magnificence, and the decline of the Renaissance was the lapse of a great tree into autumn tints. Its former radiance died slowly. When at last its final glimmers had passed out, its rays had shone their way deep into the mind of man and revealed to him the surety of his own power, which is, certainly, the touchstone to the secret of modern progress.

THE RENAISSANCE IN EUROPE

(1400—1600)

PART I

SCULPTURE

(Victoria and Albert Museum ; Wallace Collection ;
Diploma Gallery, Royal Academy ; Westminster
Abbey ; Record Office)

CHAPTER I

THE ITALIAN SCULPTORS

ANY discussion upon Italian sculpture must inevitably begin with a mention of Florence, since it was in the Florentine firmament that the first great constellation of medieval sculptors had appeared and the early stars of the Renaissance began to rise. In Florence, from the early days of the Middle Ages, the arts had been considered an essential part of life ; and the work of artists was treated there with reverence and joy. In no other city would it have been possible that a public holiday should be given in honour of a picture of the Virgin ; but just such a holiday was given out of respect for the Rucellai Madonna when it was carried in a triumphal procession through the crowded streets of Florence from the master's studio to the church of Santa Maria Novella. *200-625*

At the approach of the fifteenth century, art in Florence was more than a fast preoccupation of men's minds ; it became a vital force in the public life of the city. The Guilds, each under the protection of a special saint, were

not merely picturesque bodies of artistic *dilettanti* but an important stimulus to work and culture ; they acted, indeed, as a sort of *fascismo* for artists, and insisted, not only upon excellence of execution, but upon efficiency of work and fulfilment of contract. A stringent system of rules was enacted by the Guilds, who treated artists and sculptors not as extraordinary beings in whom every kind of eccentricity might be condoned and each turn of temperament forgiven, but as craftsmen under contract. Artists in Renaissance Florence, were, indeed, craftsmen in the city's service and not the lions of a vapid society, or the success of the evening at duchesses' dinner-tables, which is all they often are to-day. ✓

In no facet of the arts did Florence exact so unqualified a claim to brilliance as in that of sculpture. Sculpture indeed, was, rather than painting, the vehicle which carried the first indications of the new spirit. Even in the darkest days of the Middle Ages, the art of the goldsmith had never been lost, and at the advent of the Renaissance the metal-worker had already reached a high degree of accomplishment. Nearly every great artist of the Renaissance age was a goldsmith as well as a painter or sculptor, and his training often began with the designing of chalices or a processional cross.

The conditions of Florentine society were peculiarly conducive to the germination of the seeds of art, and now the Etruscan soil, after lying fallow for near upon two thousand years, enjoyed a renewed fertility. The interest taken by every citizen in the embellishment of the city ; the unrestrained patronage of the Medici and wealthy families ; and the spirit of emulation which inspired both tyrant and citizen alike, all secured for artists unlimited opportunities of attaining a high degree of accomplishment.

But as regards the sculptor, neither the favour of the tyrant nor the stimulus of Guild councils was the principal

force of encouragement ; to him the Church still remained the chief source of employment, with its constant demand for sculptured monuments and every form of pious artistic adornment. The great statesmen of Florence, poets and artists, public benefactors and people of note, were all immortalized by monuments from the hands of the foremost sculptors and the churches of Florence became not only places of devotion but national Pantheons and treasure-houses of revered national relics and possessions.

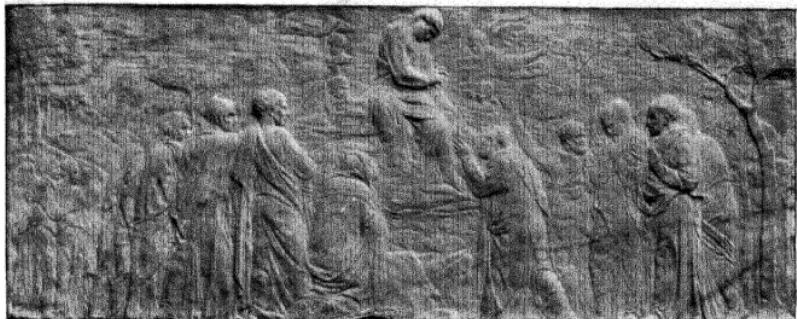
Between the days of Orcagna (1308 ?-68) and the beginning of the fifteenth century, there was a barren period in sculpture of about thirty years, but, early in the new century, a splendid group of young artists arose, chief of whom were della Quercia, Ghiberti, Brunelleschi and Donatello. The first three artists are not represented in the South Kensington Museum except by casts,¹ but of Donatello's production (c. 1386-1466) there is a fine display.

Of the original representations of Donatello's work in the Victoria and Albert Museum, the most famous is the marble relief of the 'Dead Christ raised by Angels' (Pl. I (b)), in which we see that Donatello, for all his learned coquetry with antiquity, could not divest himself of the realistic trappings of the Middle Ages. In this relief, realism is the dominant note and the tragedy of death is stressed ; the limp and heavy Body of Christ is being

¹ On the ground floor of the Victoria and Albert Museum are two square courts containing casts of almost every famous European work of sculpture, both medieval and Renaissance. These casts are of an immeasurable value to students of architecture and sculpture and form a collection which is unique in its completeness and range. In connexion with this chapter, the reader may find in these rooms casts of della Quercia's famous *Fonte Gaia* at Siena ; Brunelleschi's bronze relief of Abraham's sacrifice in the Bargello ; and one of Ghiberti's doors to the Florentine Baptistry, as well as many works alluded to in the course of the text. The charming Virgin and Child in the Victoria and Albert Museum was at one time ascribed to Ghiberti.

raised by angels who really mourn as they strive to lift the weight. The work is indeed terrible in its intensity, but even here a faint echo of pagan naturalism relieves the strain and the angels are not remote, celestial beings but winged children, touched with grief.

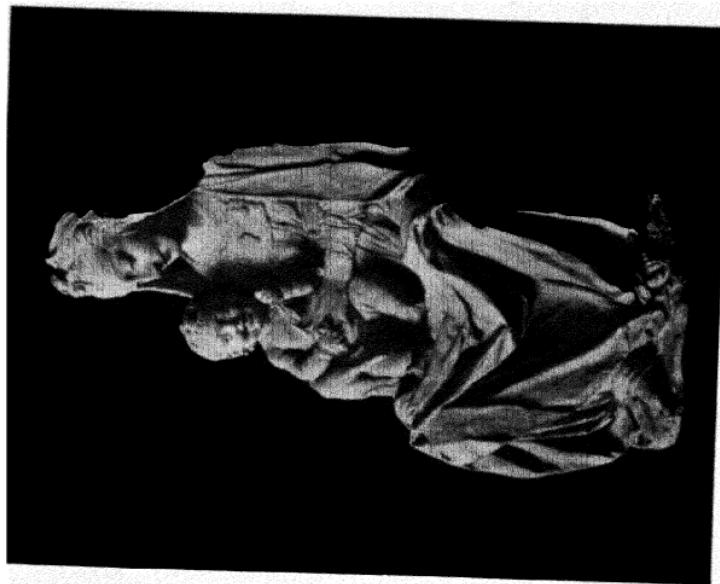
Another version of a similar subject is the small bronze relief, 'The Lamentation over the Dead Christ', dating from the last period of Donatello's life (after 1450). Here the horror is even more apparent ; the Virgin is gaunt with sorrow and the holy women tear their hair in an agonized frenzy of suffering. Only St. John is motionless, being bowed in a grief too deep for words. His pose of turning his back on the main figures of the composition is characteristic of Donatello's tendency to dissipate the dramatic interest. The otherwise unbearable intensity of the central group is thus relieved. Another lovely work, of the Florentine period which followed immediately upon the visit to Rome in 1432-33, is the 'Christ's charge of the Keys to Peter' (Pl. I (a)), a decoration for a sarcophagus or tabernacle. Here, the emotions are hardly less strongly marked and, although the relief is faint, the tense expression on the faces can be clearly seen and the individual mood and character of each figure can be discerned. In the figure of the Virgin, represented as an aged woman, a personal note is, perhaps, echoed ; Donatello's own mother died about the time when the work was undertaken and in this figure we may well have her portrait by her son. The landscape is only faintly indicated, but on the left, beyond the avenue of stone pines above which hovers an infant angel, is a building which closely recalls either the Castello St. Angelo by the Tiber or the Tomb of Cecilia Metellus on the Appian Way. If either of these identities were correct, it would provide an interesting reflection of Donatello's sojourn in the Eternal City. The relief is a little masterpiece of its kind and is a perfect example of



(a) CHRIST'S CHARGE TO PETER
Donatello. Victoria & Albert Museum

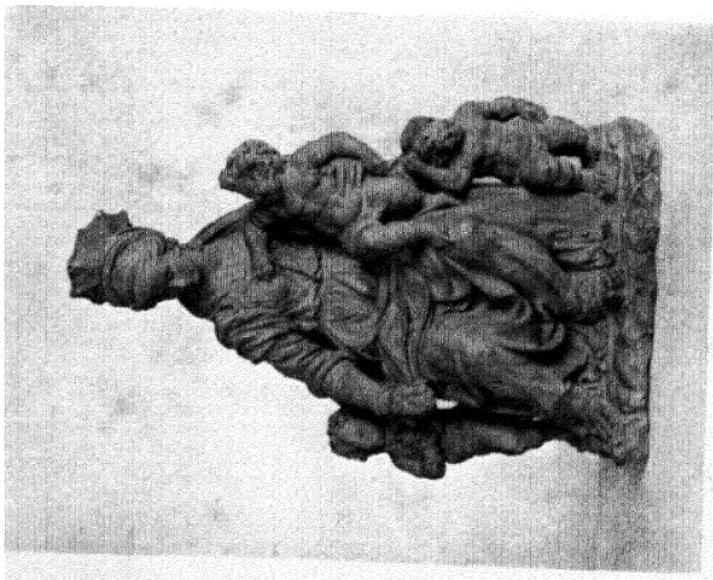


(b) CHRIST RAISED BY ANGELS
Donatello. Victoria & Albert Museum



(a) CHARITY

Master of the Unruly Children. Victoria & Albert Museum



(b) VIRGIN AND CHILD

Leonardo da Vinci (?) Victoria & Albert Museum

Donatello's *stacciato* work and of his treatment of aërial perspective.

Another representation of the Virgin by Donatello, in the Victoria and Albert Museum (this time conceived in a more conventional pose than in the 'Charge to Peter'), is the large gilt terra-cotta 'Virgin and Child' in which the Child is represented in an unusual fashion, tightly wrapped in swaddling clothes and leaning against a chair.

The uncoloured clay model of the 'Flagellation and Crucifixion,' in the Victoria and Albert Museum, is a valuable illustration of the architectonic methods of the master in his later period (c. 1460). The model bears within its framework the red lily of Florence and the Lamb, the heraldic badge of the Arte della Lana¹; whilst on the right of the predella is the escutcheon of the Spinelli family, and on the left the profile portrait of a young man. The work was probably a model for a monument to be erected for one of the Forzori family in some church in Florence, but the scheme was never carried out, possibly because of the death of the artist. Even the model is incomplete and shows only two out of the three intended panels—namely the left and the central groups.

The work proclaims itself in every respect to be a product of the closing years of Donatello's life; its affinity with the double relief of the north pulpit in S. Lorenzo is so great that authorities have more than once claimed the model to be a sketch for this pulpit relief. There are, however, certain differences in grouping and obvious discrepancies in the armorial bearings which make the theory impossible.

The model, for all its simple outlines and sketchy treatment, is an important and beautiful work. The planes are graduated in true perspective; the railing in the fore-

¹ The frame is most probably modern.

6 THE RENAISSANCE IN EUROPE

ground of the left panel ; the criss-cross pattern of spears and lances and the torches hoisted on high, all act as a spring-board from which to measure the receding distance and they heighten the dramatic effect. Again, the work is a mixture of fact and fancy, and even at the end of his life Donatello combined medieval realism with classical ornamentation. The scenes of the 'Flagellation' and 'Crucifixion' are tragic and intense, with the realistic motive of the 'Scourging' on the left, and, on the right-hand panel, the figure of the Virgin who has flung her arms apart in grief at the foot of the Cross ; but these tragic figures are surrounded by motives of much lighter import, and in the spandrels are youthful winged figures, whilst on the keystones are gaily poised *putti*. On the predella, too, flying *putti* support shells with the escutcheon, while others hold garlands beneath.

A less solemn and more secular representation of Donatello's art in the Victoria and Albert Museum is the fountain figure of the 'Winged Cupid, bearing a fish', which immediately invites comparison with Verrocchio's famous work in the Palazzo Vecchio at Florence (cast in Museum). Here Donatello seems completely pagan and worships form for form's sake. His naturalism, however, has not deserted him and the Cupid is a very typical child, enjoying the fun of carrying across his shoulders a slippery, floundering fish. This little figure is deeply expressive of the lesson which Donatello learnt in Rome, but the classical influence is even more marked in the 'Martelli Mirror' (Pl. XXII (a)). Whoever may be the artist of this bronze relief, the work's claim to fame is undiminished. It is unsurpassed for its complete recapturing of the spirit of classicism, with its two main figures, Silenus and a Bacchante, confronting each other under a filigree of grapes and garlands. This little work, indeed, is the epitome of the brave new world which the artists

of the early Renaissance epoch discovered in the unknown regions of antiquity.

It will, perhaps, be noticed that in almost all the works of Donatello, children play an important part. A love of children was, indeed, a characteristic trait of Renaissance artists and not the special prerogative of a single sculptor. Childish anatomy and emotions gave endless opportunities for sculptors to exercise their skill and attract their public. Certain artists, indeed, are known only by their portrayal of childhood and one, who is represented in the Victoria and Albert Museum by two celebrated works, has only the title of the 'Master of the Unruly Children' by which we may call him. The little group of 'Two Children Squabbling' is amusing enough, but the larger work, 'Charity with three Children' (Pl. II (a)), is a finer expression of his art and reveals deliciously the artist's understanding of children, especially in their more informal moments when the sense of nursery decorum has deserted them, and such distractions as pinching and hair-tugging take their turn.

The work in sculpture of Andrea Verrocchio (1435-88) is represented in the Victoria and Albert Museum by the sketch-model for the tomb of Cardinal Niccolo Forteguerri and the small terra-cotta statuette of St. Jerome; but there is more interest accruing to a group in terra-cotta from Verrocchio's workshop, 'The Virgin with the Laughing Child' (Pl. II (b)), which was once attributed to Antonio Rossellino and was given by Bode to Desiderio da Settignano. Recent opinion, however, has veered round to an even more interesting angle and the work is now considered as, possibly, from the hand of Verrocchio's apprentice, the young Leonardo da Vinci (1452-1519). In this delicious work, the formal Madonna motive is transferred into a simple, felicitous portrayal of a Mother and Child. The Child, strangely like Verrocchio's Boy with the Dolphin,

is an engaging figure of infectious mirth, whilst the smiling Mother, markedly Leonardesque, has just that evasive enigmatic sadness which we may find again in *Mona Lisa*.

Another work which Bode used to give to Leonardo is the swiftly designed 'Allegory of Discord' in the Victoria and Albert Museum, but more recent scholars have concluded that this mercurial relief is probably a stucco cast from a bronze—perhaps by Francesco di Giorgio (Sienese, second half of fifteenth century). Francesco di Giorgio has also been cited as the probable author of the terra-cotta statuette, the 'Young St. John the Baptist', in the Wallace Collection, a gracious work which was at one time thought to be by Benedetto da Maiano.

Along with Donatello and Verrocchio came a group of sculptors of whom the most notable are Agostino di Duccio; Desiderio da Settignano; Antonio Rossellino; Matteo Civitale; Mino da Fiesole; and Benedetto da Maiano.

Agostino di Duccio (1418–81) is represented at South Kensington by the impressive tomb of Sta. Giustina with its simple, flowing lines, and by the famous marble relief of the 'Virgin and Child' (Pl. III) which, through its insistence upon linear rhythm, and through the electric vitality in the treatment of the hair, might fittingly be described as Botticelli's sculptural equivalent. The frozen, emotionless manner which pervades the work is relieved by a sense of realism—again concentrated on aspects of childhood. The delicious open mouths of the Virgin's child-attendants and the natural loving way in which the Child clasps His Mother's finger are joyous manifestations of the sculptor's taste and perception. Agostino di Duccio is best known for the Oratory of S. Bernardino at Perugia, for which he designed a façade—partly in stone and partly in clay—crowded with flying figures whirling in space in an ecstasy of movement. His handling of terra-cotta made him justly famous and he is

noted, in this medium, for a style which is somewhat related to the manner of Donatello's bas-relief.

One of the choicest artists among Donatello's few scholars was Desiderio da Settignano (1428-64) whose exquisite taste and comely sense of style won the praise of Raphael's father, who called him '*il bravo Desider si dolce e bello*'. Desiderio possessed none of the spiritual aloofness which was the character of Duccio; but worked in a style intensely personal, which at times became robust and bold. His principal work is the Marsuppini monument in the Church of Sta. Croce, but he is represented in the various museums of Europe by many celebrated reliefs, all of which reveal his excellence in the representation of children, the study of whom he used to declare was an unalloyed delight. His marble relief in the Victoria and Albert Museum of the 'Virgin and Child with two Attendant Angels' is a striking piece of realism in which the vivid effect is intentionally heightened by a dynamic distortion of symmetry. The smaller relief of the 'Virgin and Child' recently acquired by the Museum and set in a small showcase before the window, is a more lovely thing, with its delicacy of modelling and crystalline clarity of material, showing Desiderio's exquisite sense of the delicate gradations to which light and shade may be brought in marble.

Another celebrated Florentine sculptor who is represented in the Museum is Antonio Rossellino (1427-78) a younger contemporary and follower of Donatello and Ghiberti, of whose life practically nothing is known, but of whom many fine works exist (chief among them the tomb of the Portuguese Cardinal in S. Miniato at Florence). His style, in its insistence upon landscape-background, leans towards that of Ghiberti, and all his work is characterized by a delicacy of touch and utmost technical skill. In him the idealism and sweetness of the early Renaissance are fully realized, but his work lacks the originality and

freshness of the earlier masters. The signed bust at S. Kensington of Giovanni di San Miniato is a work of restraint and profound characterization, revealing beyond doubt the kindly shrewdness of the elderly Florentine physician. In the Wallace Collection there is a fine portrait of a boy as the Child Jesus, which is also attributed to Antonio Rossellino. This is one of a class of portrait busts of children of wealthy Florentine families representing the young Christ, or in other instances St. John the Baptist, which were fashionable in Florence in the Renaissance epoch.

A younger contemporary of Rossellino who achieved considerable recognition was Matteo Civitali of Lucca (1436-1501) who was Rossellino's equal in the sculpturesque delineation of spiritual qualities. Civitali's most important works are in Lucca Cathedral and at Genoa. The Victoria and Albert Museum possesses a signed tabernacle (the only signed work outside Italy) as well as the Marble Frieze from a Tomb which, for all its restraint of composition and instinct for line, never lives beyond the stone. The motive, too, of clasped hands on each side of the exaggeratedly cadaverous profile portrait, though treated in the fine classical manner, is ordinary in conception and gives the work a banal effect.

Mino da Fiesole (1431-84), a minor sculptor of this group, is unrepresented in London except by four school pieces of the Madonna and Child in the Victoria and Albert Museum. Mino, however, must be mentioned for his spontaneity of character and lively portrayal of nature. His tombs in the Badia at Florence are celebrated for their grace and charm of style, but his Madonna reliefs, of which there are many, are pretty in conception, though self-conscious in composition, and are never quite free from mannerism.

An artist who claims a place beside Mino da Fiesole is Benedetto da Maiano (1442-97) famed for his pulpit in

Sta. Croce (cast in Victoria and Albert Museum). Benedetto has three terra-cotta reliefs at South Kensington ; all of them studies for three out of the five marble panels of the Sta. Croce pulpit. A fourth relief is in the Kaiser Friedrich Museum in Berlin. The little panels are all definitely pictorial in treatment and their narrative is their dominant interest ; painting, indeed, seems Benedetto's *métier* more than sculpture and the fact that he began life as a *tarsiatore* (a maker of inlaid marriage chests) may account for his pictorial style in bas-relief.

Neither Donatello nor Ghiberti had many pupils and neither can be said to have founded a school : Ghiberti even less than Donatello. Ghiberti's supposed pupil, Antonio Pollaiuolo (1429-98), showed little sign of his master's influence but is distinguished by a style of almost brutal energy and bizarre realism, characteristics which are the very antithesis of Ghiberti's quiet landscape painting in bronze. Antonio Pollaiuolo is not represented in London, but another member of the Pollaiuolo family is represented at South Kensington : Simone Pollaiuolo (il Cronaca) (1454-1508), a pupil of Brunelleschi, whose chapel from the Conventual Church of Sta. Chiara, once in the Via San Marco, Borgo San Spirito, Florence, is here reconstructed in its original form.

Our study of the Florentine Renaissance sculptors now brings us on to the work of the della Robbia family : Luca della Robbia and his nephew Andrea ; and Andrea's four sons, Giovanni, Luca, Ambrogio and Girolamo, all of whom are represented in the Victoria and Albert Museum.

Luca della Robbia (1399-1482) offers a striking contrast to his contemporaries, Ghiberti, Donatello and Verrocchio, and still more to their immediate followers. In Luca's art, there was none of the pictorial draughtsmanship of Ghiberti, the rugged realism of Donatello, nor the scientific mannerisms of Verrocchio.

His conception of art was to keep as close to life as possible ; to cut life to the quick without a trace of ruthlessness ; to represent nature as truth. The charm of his work is never impaired by an exaggerated science nor a sentimental picturesqueness and yet he is, perhaps, of all Italian sculptors, the fullest in sentimental attraction. Luca della Robbia may, indeed, be considered the Fra Angelico of sculpture ; like the Friar of S. Marco, he knew the beauty of holiness ; in his art, the celestial met the terrestrial and heaven was brought to earth. Luca's earliest recorded work is, at the same time, his best known : the Singing Galleries for the Duomo in Florence for which he received the commission in 1431, and a final payment in 1439. These celebrated reliefs of choir-boys singing the *Laudate Dominum* are typical of the master's style ; the figures are rounded, beautiful forms, instinct with grace and individuality, and music seems to issue from the stone.

Luca's lyric sentiment is best seen in the glazed terracotta work for which he is most famous ; in this medium a lesser artist would have stooped to showiness or meretricious colour effects ; but Luca della Robbia used many colours without a trace of garishness. Andrea, however, had a smaller range and preferred the quiet contrasts of pure white on pale blue, making patterns like fragments of a summer sky. Luca's nephew and great-nephews continued to manufacture the glazed earthenware of Luca's invention, but they lacked the fine taste of their master ; new and coarser colours were introduced and the perfect harmony was broken. A tendency to exaggeration also ensued and Andrea, who had been a follower of Savonarola, allowed the influence of the Piagnoni to enter too closely into his work and created a number of Pietas which are grotesque in their exaggerated drama.¹

¹ Cf. The coloured Pietà in the corridor leading from Room 63 of the Victoria and Albert Museum.



VIRGIN AND CHILD WITH ANGELS
Agostino di Duccio. Victoria & Albert Museum



(a) THE ADORATION OF THE SHEPHERDS
Luca della Robbia. Victoria & Albert Museum



(b) VIRGIN AND CHILD WITH ST. JOHN
Michelangelo. Royal Academy

Of Luca's work in the Victoria and Albert Museum, the most celebrated pieces are the two large medallions : the 'Adoration of the Shepherds' (Pl. IV (a)) and the *Stemma*. The former piece is a delicious mixture of naturalism and idealism ; the scene in the stable, with the homely farm-yard animals, is a reflection of life itself, whilst the types and expressions of the faces have a remote, unearthly beauty which can only be imagined in an ideal world. The latter work, the *Stemma*, the heraldic device of King René and his Wife,¹ is a flourish of magnificent decoration in vivid greens and blues, coming like a piece of bravado from our serene, unworldly artist, but seeming, at the same time, a fitting design for the King (*le bon roi René*) whose interest in the arts was such that he attracted artists, musicians, and scholars from far and wide to his castles at Tarascon and Anjou. The *Stemma* is very large, being 11 feet in diameter, and is composed of fourteen sections. The flaming brazier and the motto : ' *Dardant Désir*' , were used by René as symbols of his love for his first wife, Isabella.

Another important work in the Victoria and Albert Museum attributed to Luca della Robbia is the set of twelve circular medallions, which may have been the decorations mentioned by Vasari as being commissioned by Piero de' Medici for a small study in the Medici Palace. The scenes represent the labours of the twelve months and the borders show the average duration of day and night for each month.

In South Kensington the work of all the della Robbia family finds a place, and interesting comparisons can be drawn between the accomplishment of the master and that

¹ Allan Marquand, in *Robbia Heraldry* (1919), dates the *Stemma* to about 1470, at which time René was married to his second wife, Jeanne de Laval. The initial 'I', therefore, which was generally thought to belong to his first wife, Isabella of Anjou, is probably that of Jeanne.

of his descendants. But a common trait occurs in the art of each of the della Robbias throughout the line : an interest in children. There are few of their works, except the purely decorative or heraldic, in which children do not appear, and the mere mention of the name della Robbia conjures up in the minds of most people a vision of the Florentine foundling hospital with its medallions of swaddled *bambini*. At South Kensington, the 'Boy with the Bagpipes', though a humble school piece, not attributed to Luca or even, with certainty, to Andrea, illustrates very well the della Robbia understanding of children ; and its unaffected naturalism and mock solemnity have made it justly loved.

The student in the Victoria and Albert Museum, after contemplating the works of della Robbia, will find that he comes face to face with the greatest personality of the Renaissance : Michelangelo, whose marble Cupid dominates the room (Frontispiece).

For the appreciation of the art of Michelangelo, our setting of the Renaissance scene must be expanded ; and our thoughts must stretch from Florence to Rome. Florence, indeed, had been the first Italian city to feel the stress of the full Renaissance, but Rome quickly followed in her footsteps and, being the centre of the Curia and the Vatican, attracted a number of wealthy patrons and rich connoisseurs in art and scholarship. The princes of Rome were the very antithesis of the Medici in Florence ; they were the embodiments of the ideal of Niccolo Machiavelli (1469-1527), the cynical wizened child of the middle age of the Renaissance, who considered the sole aim of a Prince to be the establishment of an all-powerful state, without concern for the means of vice, crime and cruelty which might be used in its making.

Yet even Machiavelli had a respect for the past and was an ardent student of the classics. In a letter written from his

country house near Florence, to which he retired after his imprisonment, Machiavelli describes his daily occupation as 'snaring thrushes, cutting wood and playing at *cricca* with the butcher. But', he continues, 'when evening comes, I return home and shut myself up in my study, having taken off my rustic garb, bespattered with mud and dirt, and put on a suit adapted for courts. Thus fitly habited, I enter the courts of the men of antiquity where, being kindly received by them, I feed on that food which alone is mine and for which I was born.'

The sun which rose over Renaissance Rome and radiated its influence over all European art was Michelangelo Buonarroti, sculptor, painter, architect, engineer and poet. Michelangelo (1475-1564), though born of honourable ancestry, was separated in early days from his mother who gave him to be suckled by a stone-cutter's wife at Settignano, so that later he used to say that with his nurse's milk he sucked in chisels and mallets. His artistic tendencies led him at an early age to the workshop of Ghirlandaio, where he won his master's admiration from the first and helped in the execution of the frescoes at Sta. Maria Novella. But two geniuses, even young with old, cannot be long together, and Ghirlandaio soon had an irremediable rupture with his pupil. Ghirlandaio's *bottega*, indeed, had hatched a wild swan which the nest could not long contain. At sixteen, Michelangelo assumed his independence and went to study the marbles in the Medici gardens which Lorenzo had put at the disposal of students. Thus he won Lorenzo's patronage. In the Medici palace Michelangelo's real education began ; he sat at his patron's board, listened to Pico's learned dialogues on Plato, and imbibed the golden learning of ancient Greece. But even in this felicitous circumstance, independence and the sense of his own vocation overcame him, and at times he would slip away to dissect a human body, or to listen to the

sermons of Savonarola or to read from Dante or Boccaccio with a boon companion in a quiet place. In 1496 Michelangelo went to Rome, where it was destined that the greater part of his life should be spent.

In Rome, Michelangelo lived under the reign of nine Popes¹—a span of sixty-one years which were absorbed by three great events : the abortive incident of the Mausoleum of Pope Julius II ; the painting of the Sistine Chapel ; and the building of St. Peter's. Never were the artist's difficulties lessened ; Leo X transcended Julius II in temper and impatience and kept Michelangelo in incessant exasperation by his inefficiency of organization which meant a constant shortage of supplies. But out of this Titanic labour resulted such a masterpiece of painting as the world had never seen : the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel. Every difficulty assailed the artist in his work : damp walls ; bad materials ; lazy apprentices ; an interfering Chamberlain (a veritable Malvolio in pomposity) ; and, worst of all, a Papal master whose transports of temper were such that in his furies the scaffolding would quiver and plaster-dust would shower from the ceiling.

Michelangelo never married. He declared often that his wife was his art and that she had been a shrew. But he found one great love in Vittoria Colonna, a Platonist and a great lady, after whose death the light seemed to go out in his life. In his old age, wealth was his possession ; but he had never cared for the amenities brought by money ; and he continued to live like a poor man, dressing shabbily, eating little, and working with frantic speed all night by the glow of a candle stuck in the front of his dirty linen cap. Michelangelo's last years were spent in a premonition of death and he once remarked that Death was tugging at his cape. He died in Rome on 18 February, 1564, but

¹ Julius II, Leo X, Adrian VI, Clement VII, Paul III, Julius III, Marcellus, Paul IV, and Pius IV.

his body was taken to Florence, where it was buried in S. Croce with every debt of honour that could be paid by the Duke, the Academy and the great Florentine public.

The spiritual torments of Michelangelo's later life find no premonition in the 'Statue of Cupid' (Frontispiece) in the Victoria and Albert Museum. This was made for Jacopo Galli, and is thought to date to the first year in Rome, 1496-7. The work is an achievement of the highest excellence and the easily apparent restoration of the left arm does not take from its perfection.

Another fine work in sculpture by Michelangelo in London, surprisingly placed in the rarely visited Diploma Gallery of the Royal Academy, is the marble relief, a tondo of the Virgin and Child and St. John (Pl. IV (b)) which may especially be admired for its fine modelling and the vitality of its figures.

In the Victoria and Albert Museum, moreover, in the same room as the Cupid, are three cases of wax models; studies for the Slave for the tomb of Julius II; the David; Hercules slaying Cacus; and the St. Peter's Pietà. Although these little works are only slight essays in a rough material, they caused Rodin, who especially admired the 'Slave', to remark that a *prie-Dieu* should be set in front of them.¹ In the wax models, as in everything which issued from the hand of Michelangelo, is reflected that quality which characterized their giant creator, the quality of genius which made Michelangelo the marvel of the age and the artist who, according to Vasari, soared above all others as an eagle among birds ('*soprà gli altri com' aguila vola* ').

But it was not only as an artist that Michelangelo was

¹ These models are interestingly arranged in the Museum, with photographs of the completed works fixed to the base of the show-cases, so that comparisons between the studies and the works themselves may be made.

aquiline ; as a man he was imperious and awe-inspiring and unable to fit into the normal scheme of human relationships. Even Leonardo da Vinci did not escape an insult from him, and his quarrels with his Papal masters almost caused a war between Rome and his native Florence. Only one man, indeed, had the courage to withstand Michelangelo's commanding temper : his fellow-student, Pietro Torrigiani (1472-1522) who in a quarrel broke the master's nose. It would seem that to have dealt a blow at Michelangelo would have been claim enough to fame, but Torrigiani's celebrity is not confined to this single act, for he is gloriously connected with our country, where he served, in London, under Henry VIII, for whom he began a monument at Windsor which was never finished. Torrigiani's most elaborate work is to be seen in Westminster Abbey : the Tomb (in King Henry VII's chapel) of Henry VII (1456-1509) and his Queen, Elizabeth of York (1465-1503) (Pl. V). The agreements between the executors of Henry VII and the Florentine artist for the construction of the Tomb still exist ; it was to cost £1,500, and seems to have been finished by 1518. Torrigiani was assisted by English apprentices and expert workers in brass and marble ; the large rose at the north end of the tomb, supported by a greyhound and dragon, is English work. The fine recumbent effigies of the King and Queen lie side by side as directed by Henry VII, who had an eye for obsequial matters and gave his queen the most gorgeous funeral pageant ever seen in London. The figures are gilt bronze ; the tomb is of black marble, with a carved frieze and medallions in coppergilt representing the Virgin and the ten patron saints of Henry VII, including St. Michael and St. George, St. Christopher, St. Edward the Confessor, and St. Barbara. The bronze closure is not the work of Torrigiani ; it is the work of English craftsmen and repeats the pattern of the King's heraldic badges : the Welsh

Dragon, the Tudor Rose and the greyhound of the Nevilles. Parchment scrolls containing elegiac verses by Skelton, the Laureate to Henry VIII, used to hang upon the grating.

Another work at Westminster by Pietro Torrigiani—perhaps his masterpiece—is the effigy of Margaret, Duchess of Richmond (1443–1509), mother of Henry VII and the foundress of two Cambridge colleges—Christ's and St. John's—and of a Chair in Divinity at both Universities of Oxford and Cambridge. On her tomb she is represented in her widow's dress, with a hood and long mantle, with her feet on a hind couchant and her delicate, wrinkled hands raised in prayer.

In the Wallace Collection is a marble Head of Christ ascribed to Torrigiani, a work in high relief enclosed in an oval frame of stone ornamented with conventional foliage alternating with Tudor roses. The work, which was probably executed in England, was found by Sir Richard Wallace over the chimney-piece of the Servants' Sitting-room at Sudbourn Hall, Suffolk. Sir Richard brought the work up to Hertford House and placed it in the Great Parlour. The marble head, which is a type found among Florentine terra-cottas of the fifteenth century, is identical in design and modelling with the coloured terra-cotta Head of Christ in the lunette of the monument to Dr. John Yong (Master of the Rolls under Henry VIII) executed by Torrigiani in 1576 and formerly in the Rolls Chapel, Chancery Lane, but now to be seen in the Record Office.

Torrigiani's stay in England was a happy one, and he had a sincere admiration for the English. According to Benvenuto Cellini, he attempted to persuade the latter to come to England to assist him, but Cellini refused to live among 'such beasts as the English'. Torrigiani's hasty and violent temper, which caused him to end his days in the prisons of the Inquisition, has set him up in the popular

imagination as a swashbuckler of somewhat the same calibre as Benvenuto Cellini (1500-72), the versatile artist and shameless braggadocio whose scandalous and amusing autobiography is now more widely appreciated than his art. Cellini's sculpture is unrepresented in London, although there is a cast at the Crystal Palace of his famous Perseus which won for its creator a triumph adequate to his highest expectations. Odes and sonnets in Italian, Greek and Latin were written in its favour; Pontormo and Bronzino loaded it with compliments, and visitors in Florence used to flock to see the artist sauntering through the Loggia dei Lanzi in admiration of his own accomplishment. Cellini, in the past, was often quoted as the perfect type of goldsmith-sculptor, but in reality he was much more thoroughly the former than the latter, for his art was a small one, elegant and meticulous with every attention paid to detail and less consideration given to the general form. Cellini was in truth the master craftsman of ornament, and a trinket or a salt cellar was the ideal object upon which he should exploit his ingenuity. His autobiography, however, would have us believe that he was one of the world's most significant sculptors, whereas, in reality, he was a white blackbird among artists, neither one thing nor the other. The brilliant human document of his life, which charmed the world and captivated such widely different men as Walpole, Schiller, Goethe and Lamartine, is as extravagant as it is amazing and contains passages of boasting and mendacity in which its author comes very close to Shakespeare's Pistol or the Menteur of Corneille.

A very different personality from Cellini, but one who equally well epitomizes the later days of the Renaissance is Gian Bologna (1529-1608), a Frenchman by birth, but a Florentine in spirit and education. His bronze Mercury in the Bargello (cast in the Victoria and Albert Museum)

shows that something of the genuine classic spirit had passed into his nature ; this work is not a mere reminiscence of any antique statue, but the quintessence of a culture drawn direct from Virgil.¹ In the Victoria and Albert Museum are several delightful works attributed to this artist or his school. The relief in wax of Christ before Pilate is the finest of a set of three striking scenes from the Trial of Christ, studies for a series of bronze panels. It is a brilliant essay of perspective with its handling of figures in four or five different planes and its glimpse through an opening into a colonnade. The well-known Fountain, too, surmounted by a slim marble figure of the young Dionysus, is a work of elegance and harmony.

But the charming classical interpretations of Gian Bologna already contain the seeds of effeminacy and decadence : seeds, indeed, which begin to germinate in the product of every sculptor subsequent to Michelangelo. With Michelangelo the heights had been scaled and his stupendous influence dominated, almost to the point of paralysation, the development of plastic art. Michelangelo's art was so completely personal and, yet, at the same time, so sweepingly universal that the growth of sculpture was, for a time, arrested. Temporarily, it seemed that sculptors would do no more than slavishly imitate the external characteristics of the master's methods and lose more and more his inward spirit. The art of Sculpture, however, was not dead, but dormant ; though by the time it had its second efflorescence changes had come to pass. Florence was then effete and, with the relinquishing of her freedom she had become sterile. A change of scene was, then, required and the Baroque style, heralded by Michelangelo as the successor to the Renaissance,

¹ In the Sir John Soane Museum, Lincoln's Inn Fields, on the staircase, is a smaller version by Gian Bologna of the bronze Mercury.

needed a new theatre in which to mount its florid pageantry. Protagonists from Rome and the North now took the centre of the stage ; and Florence, the *diva*, with a glorious record of successes, retired from the scene.

CHAPTER II

THE SCULPTORS OF SPAIN, FRANCE, AND GERMANY

(a) SPAIN

THE part played by Spain in the history of the European Renaissance was a special one, since its development was largely due to external circumstance. The Spaniards became one nation by the conquest of Granada (1492) when the rule of the Moors in Spain was brought to an end and the crowns of Aragon and Castile were united. The religious enthusiasm of the people was then inflamed ; the Jews and Moors were expelled and the Inquisition was established with powers equally formidable to peasant, citizen or king.¹ The revival of learning in Spain differed essentially from that in Italy. Centuries of war had left the country too fatigued to look abroad for culture, and the dominant characteristic of Spanish achievements in art and letters was its undiminished national originality such as is reflected in the work of Cervantes, Camoens (in Portugal), and Calderón. Quixote, indeed, in his humours and absurdities is universal, but in type he is also unmistakably Spanish. In the Spanish Renaissance there was no slavish imitation of the classics and no formal humanism ; and the movement was little fruitful in foreign scholarship.

¹ The Moorish influence persisted in Spain even after the expulsion of the Moors, and Granada remained for some time so Oriental that a special form of half-Mahometan Mass was devised for its inhabitants.

Its influence did not stimulate a passion for antiquity but radiated a fresh delight in national qualities and an exultation in the rediscovery of the world and man. Had it kept its independence, the Spanish Renaissance genius would have gone far, with a proportionate acknowledgement of Italian riches intermingling with its own great national powers. But the Inquisition and the despotic Catholic Absolutism crushed it in the making and did not allow its intellect to develop. Progress, however, was not entirely held in chains, and a desire for exploration arose which may be considered the prime facet of the Renaissance in Spain. Nearly all the great explorers were Spanish or Portuguese ; Columbus and Vespucci ; Diaz and Vasco da Gama ; Cortes and Pizarro. With their discoveries, the centre of gravity in politics and commerce was displaced and the Ocean was substituted for the Mediterranean as a route of trade and as a means of foreign intercourse.

The position of Renaissance sculpture in the history of Spanish art is difficult to assess, since its duration was short-lived and the sculpture of the Middle Ages seemed to pass almost without a break into the Baroque. The sculpture which existed, moreover, was almost indissolubly associated with religious architecture. The permeation, too, of the true Renaissance feeling into Spain was delayed, and it was not until the last years of the fifteenth century that the first premonitions of the coming Italian influence were felt. About 1500, a few adventurous spirits from the *botteghe* of Italian sculptors found their way to Spain, where they spread the new artistic Gospel and established the principles of the Quattrocento. The Spaniards, even though they had been nurtured on the Gothic, readily adopted the new system, since it lent itself to the rich surface ornamentation in which their taste delighted, giving rise to that kind of decorative sculpture known as the plateresque, of which Alonso Berruguete, architect,

sculptor and painter, was the most famous exponent. Among the first Spanish sculptors to follow the example of Italy was Damian Formont of Valencia.¹ Formont is unrepresented in London ; his great work is the Retable of the Pilar at Saragossa, which he was commissioned to design immediately on his return from Italy.

Contemporary with Formont was a group of foreign sculptors working at Seville who represented the dominant influences which ultimately marked the later Renaissance and Baroque-Spanish styles ; of these the most significant are Miguel and Francisco Nicoloso Pisano, two native Florentines, and Pietro Torrigiani, who went to Seville after his sojourn in England, and left there his great St. Jerome (now in Seville Museum), which Goya admired above all other pieces of modern sculpture in Spain.

The greatest of the native Spanish sculptors of the early sixteenth century who adopted the Italian manner was Alonso Berruguete (b. 1480). A painter's son, he went in early youth to Italy to study art, and there came under the influence of Michelangelo. On his return from Italy in 1520, his fame was established ; the Spaniards seized quickly upon the emphatic gesture and florid ornamentation of Berruguete's exaggerated manner, and Charles V immediately appointed him Sculptor and Painter to the Court. Berruguete's works are spread over the length and breadth of Spain, but unfortunately none has ever reached London. Our city, indeed, is very barren in the possession of Spanish Renaissance sculpture, and it is only in odd corners of the South Kensington Museum that a few representations of the period can be seen. A charming work,

¹ Valencia was, of all Spanish cities, the first and foremost to absorb the Italian influence. The influence of Petrarch and Boccaccio upon Valencian men of letters was felt at an early date ; and it was from the city of Valencia that the Borgia family was derived.

however, is the small alabaster relief of the ' Virgin and Child ' by Diego da Siloë (before 1500-68) in the Victoria and Albert Museum, which is surprisingly national in character in spite of having been produced at Granada at a time when the city had not been long without the Moors and still retained its Moorish character.

Of Berruguete's contemporaries the most celebrated are Gaspar Becerra (1520-71), another Italianate sculptor in the style of Michelangelo and the author of the celebrated S. Jerome at Burgos ; and Juan Juni (1507-77), an equally ardent follower in the style of the Italian master and even more thorough than Berruguete in his over-emphatic gesture and sensational pathos. At Segovia, his best-known work is to be seen—the Entombment—but in London, at the Victoria and Albert Museum, there is a painted terra-cotta figure of S. Joseph which is ascribed to him. But for all his exaggeration, Juni is, perhaps, a more considerable artist than Berruguete, since he is more individual and less enslaved by the imitation of his Italian pattern.

After Berruguete, Becerra and Juan Juni, ' Michelangelism ' became the stamp of Spanish sculpture, and a monotonous line of followers in the Italian style ensued. But in Gregorio Hernandez (1570-1636) there was a decided reaction towards naturalism, and with his advent it seemed as if the extreme Michelangelesque convention was being broken. But the change was an unhappy one and dramatic emotion gave place to a saccharine sweetness.

Contemporary with Hernandez was Juan Martinez Montañes (d. 1649), the greatest figure of the Sevillian school and the link between the High Renaissance and the Baroque sculpture. During his long career, Montañes was immensely productive and an extraordinary number of his works survive, especially in Seville, where he founded a flourishing school, and died at an extreme old age. At

South Kensington, Montañes is represented by a "Virgin of Sorrows" which, in the tranquillity of its expression, has a serene and tragic charm. In the same room, moreover, is a 'St. Francis Xavier' of the later Sevillian school, which reveals a characteristic sense of sentiment and formalism.

Montañes' followers were many, both at Seville and at Granada; of the Sevillian group, the chief were Alonso Mena, Luís Ortez, and Alonso Martínez, and later Roldán, the father of the only Spanish sculptress, Roldana, who was appointed Sculptor to the Chamber in 1695. In Granada, Alonso Cano (1601-67) founded a school deriving from that of his master Montañes and fully launched the Baroque style in Southern Spain.

(b) FRANCE

Of all European countries, France was the first and closest to absorb the influence of the Italian revival. The expedition of Charles VIII to Naples in 1494 set rolling the ball of French enthusiasm for Italian taste, and a desire for Italian culture was aroused in France which continued until the extinction of the House of Valois (1589). Louis XII and François I, in their constant expeditions to Italy to secure the Italian provinces they had claimed, became subject to the fascination of Italian art and culture; Henri II, too, strengthened the connexion with the South by his marriage with Catherine de' Medici, whose ill-fated children, François II, Charles IX, and Henri III, were almost as Italian as they were French.

The relations between the two countries were peaceful as well as military; and the warlike expeditions of the French kings were not the only means by which Frenchmen reached the Italian frontier. French scholars were in frequent passage to and fro across the Alps in their pilgrimages after learning, and Italians came constantly to

France as courtiers, ambassadors, merchants and artists. French society, then, assumed a strong Italian colouring, and the French Court tried to equal in polish and manners the ducal residences of Italy.¹

The zenith of the French Renaissance was reached under the aegis of its great patron, François I (1515-47), who is known all the world over as the first French Maecenas of Italian artists, and as the King who, at Fontainebleau, employed Andrea del Sarto, Rosso, Primaticcio and Cellini, and invited Leonardo da Vinci to the Château of Amboise. With François I the French Court became a social and artistic centre, and under his direction the old feudal nobility finally transformed itself into a courtly aristocracy.

François himself was not a scholar, but he had a real love of learning and an appreciation of beauty. To his love of the arts, many famous buildings are due; not only the Louvre and Fontainebleau, built and rebuilt under his direction, but Chambord and the other *châteaux* of the Loire which the members of the Court erected to follow the example of their sovereign. Around him, moreover, the greatest scholars and poets, Budé, Amyot, Ronsard, du Bellay, formed a brilliant constellation.

All the manifestations of the French Renaissance were essentially intellectual. In literature, Joachim du Bellay launched a new poetic theory in a learned essay, *L'Illustration de la Langue Francaise*, a startling ultimatum in the cause of Antiquity. Rabelais, moreover, for all his ample

¹ In the Wallace Collection is a small seated figure of a Lady wearing an elaborate jewelled costume typical of the fashion of Court ladies in the French Renaissance. She is looking at a piece of needlework which she holds in her right hand, while behind her, to the right, is a small table with her scissors and work-box. The statuette is dated 1558 and is signed with a monogram G.C. for which has been suggested the name Claude Grantcourt, one of the sculptors employed at the Château of Fontainebleau.

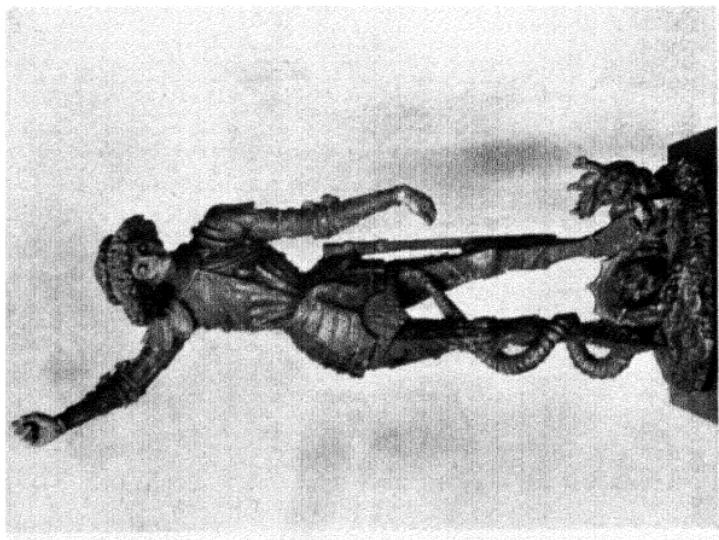
humour and his value set on laughter (*le rire est le propre de l'homme*) was Erasmus in another guise ; whilst Montaigne (1533-92) under his pretence of easy table-talk, was a stoic as well as a sceptic and respected the dignity of learning. He often, indeed, declared that his happiest hours were spent in the company of the ancients in the tower-library which he built for himself as a refuge from the turmoil of the outside world.

In sculpture, French artists were few, and most workers in stone at the time of the French Renaissance expended their talent on architectural decoration ; but among the few, the sculptor who crystallized the spirit of the age was Jean Goujon (d. 1564-8). It is a pity that neither he nor his elder contemporary, Michel Colombe (fl. c. 1500), who designed the ducal mausoleum at Brou, is represented in London. Jean Goujon, one of the decorators of the Louvre, is chiefly famous for the statue of Diana (now in the Louvre) which once adorned a fountain at Anet, and for his Fountain of the Innocents in Paris (once in the Marché des Innocents and now in a square beyond Les Halles), of which there is a cast in the Victoria and Albert Museum. For a study, however, of French Renaissance sculpture, London is not helpful, and at South Kensington there is very little that we can consider of the period except a slim statuette in oak, painted and gilded, of St. George and the Dragon (Pl. VI (a)) which in its springy movement and almost humorous naïveté is more medieval than Renaissance. There is, too, an Allegorical Figure in box-wood of almost a century later, ascribed to the school of Germain Pilon.

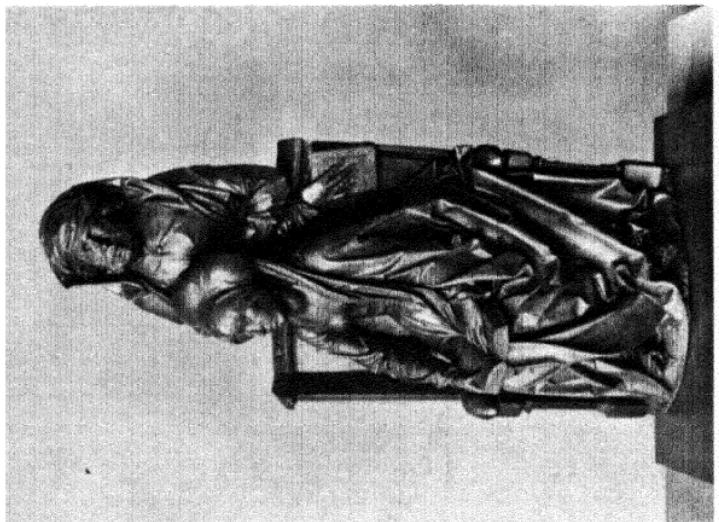
Germain Pilon (1537-90), the Court sculptor to Henri II and the designer of the celebrated tomb of Henri II and Catherine de' Medici at Saint-Denis, is represented in the Wallace Collection by a fine bronze bust of Charles IX (1560-74) wearing the royal mantle and the Order of



TOMB OF HENRY VII AND ELIZABETH OF YORK
Pietro Torrigiani. Westminster Abbey



(a) ST. GEORGE AND THE DRAGON
French School. Victoria & Albert Museum



(b) SALOME AND ZEBEDEE
Tilman Riemenschneider. Victoria & Albert Museum

the Saint Esprit. The King, in spite of his striking appearance, was a feeble character and never escaped from the domination of his matriarchal mother Catherine de' Medici, or from that of the Duc de Guise, the leader of the Catholic party in the catastrophic Religious Wars which left the whole of France a wreck. The outstanding event of Charles's reign was the Massacre of the Huguenots on St. Bartholomew's Eve, 1572. Pilon's bust marks Charles's resemblance to his brother Henri III so clearly that it was at one time thought to represent the latter King.¹ In his capacity of *sculpteur du roi* Pilon executed a number of portrait busts of the royal family, including those of Henri II and his three sons, François II, Charles IX, and Henri III. He also designed medals and reliefs and small decorative figures; perhaps his best-known work is the group of the Three Graces (in the Louvre), part of the Monument which enshrined the heart of Henri II, his protector. With Germain Pilon, we have the last of the French sculptors of the Renaissance, for he belonged to the second generation of French artists of the sixteenth century, being some twenty years the junior of Jean Goujon. But with him, also, we have the beginning of a new style in sculpture: the portrait-bust, which became the fashionable art and which was to occupy the attention of a long line of French sculptors throughout the succeeding centuries.

¹ In the Wallace Collection is a small painted terra-cotta bust of Charles IX's brother, Henri III. The King, born in 1551, succeeded his brother Charles in 1574; he was elected King of Poland in 1573, but fled in 1574 although he continued to use the title. Henri III was the friend of artists but, politically, was as ill-fated as his brothers and, like Charles, he suffered from the disastrous influence of his mother, Catherine de' Medici. He was, moreover, weak, effeminate and perverse and showed himself quite unable to contend with the Religious Wars which continued throughout his reign. He muddled all his political dealings until he was assassinated by a Dominican Friar in 1589.

(c) GERMANY

To pass from the Italian and French Renaissance into the German is to come from morning into afternoon ; the heat of the sun has died ; and the air, though still vitalizing to the intellect, has replaced its sparkle by a chill.

The German Renaissance was purely intellectual and its principal manifestation was a desire for religion and learning, two elements prominent in medieval times when Germany had been famous for its universities, seven having been founded between the years 1348-1409. After 1440, new studies took root in the seats of learning ; travelling professors such as Pieter Luder and Samuel Karoch brought back the news of humanism from Italy, and Greek, Latin and Hebrew erudition was soon at home in Teutonic territory.

It would seem, at first, as if Germany had followed very closely on the heels of Italy in its recapturing of the spirit of antiquity ; but, in reality, the Italian influence played only a superficial part in the artistic and intellectual manifestations of the German Renaissance. In art, the Germans were wedded to the Gothic and yielded little to Southern influence. Dürer, Pieter Vischer, Cranach, Schöngauer and Holbein could all rival—and at times excel—the Italian painters in their consummate mastery of technique, but spiritually they were true to their own artistic concept and were little touched by the Italian example.

In learning, moreover, the North was very different from the South ; whereas in Italy the enthusiasm for knowledge expanded into all classes, in Germany it was the privilege of a few cultivated men of the higher middle class. In the main, the German aristocracy was gross and barbarous, and, being contemptuous of culture, did nothing to further the cause of art and letters ; the German

dialects, moreover, were too coarse properly to absorb the subtle refinement of the antique influence. German professors, it is true, journeyed to Padua and Florence to catch the spirit of the new culture, but on their return to Cologne or Tübingen, they found themselves powerless to break down native prejudices or to alter the minds of the old German doctors, who were completely tied to antiquated manuals and methods and whose pedantry and dullness were epitomized by the lengthy formulae of their academic titles and diplomas.

The Renaissance in Germany, with its preoccupation for religion, entirely lacked the pagan exuberance which was its character in Italy. Its conception of beauty was abstract and metaphysical, rather than concrete or sensual ; and its protagonists often seemed to lack the true aesthetic faculties. Outside painting, the range of the arts was limited ; architecture was little more than the continuation of the Gothic style, whilst in sculpture there were few great names to compare with the wealth of those in Italy. The men of learning, too, were indifferent to the arts, and even Erasmus, the most fastidious and sensitive of the Northern Humanists, was unaffected by the art of Raphael and Michelangelo.

German sculpture, throughout the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, consisted mainly of wood-carving. Stone, which had been the principal medium in the Gothic era, was now neglected by artists and was only in request for recumbent effigies and carved decorations on the tombs of princes and prelates. Wood-carving, on the other hand, was in great demand. Sometimes the carvings were very large, being used for a reredos or a whole altarpiece,¹ but generally they took the form of small figures or altar-

¹ The altarpiece of carved wood representing the Virgin between two Saints, in the Victoria and Albert Museum, is a good example of the style.

frontal reliefs, or a 'Palmesel', a semblance of Christ riding upon the ass, which was carried round the church on a Palm Sunday procession.¹

The chief centres of sculpture in Renaissance Germany were Würzburg and Nuremberg, but mention should also be made of Austria, where Michael Pacher, a Tyrolean carver and painter, created a masterpiece, the carved and painted altar reredos of the Coronation of the Virgin in the little village church at San Wolfgang. Pacher is a rare artist, and outside the Tyrol there is little of his work except a famous painting in the Munich Pinacothek. In the Victoria and Albert Museum, however, is a figure of a Bishop in painted limewood, which is attributed to his school.

Towards the end of the fifteenth century, Würzburg for a time took the lead in sculpture under its master carver Tilman Riemenschneider (1468-1531), an immigrant from Saxony, who achieved such fame for the little Bavarian city that he became its Burgomaster. His dignity, however, as a civic official was later impaired and some of his property was lost by his extraordinary action in taking part against the Bishop in the Peasants' War. Riemenschneider's most famous works are the Monument of Archbishop Rudolf von Scherenberg in Würzburg Cathedral (cast in the Victoria and Albert Museum) and the figures of Adam and Eve in the Museum at Würzburg. But in London, there are several fine examples of his art. The British Museum has a relief in wood, 'The Adoration of the Magi'; while at South Kensington are two celebrated works: the limewood figures of Angels carrying Candlesticks (Murray Bequest) and the 'Mary-Salome and Zebedee' (Pl. VI (b)), the latter of which reveals most clearly that mixture of tenderness and gauntness,

¹ The finest existing Palmesel is in the Deutsches Museum, Berlin, but there is a good example in limewood in the Victoria and Albert Museum (Murray Bequest).

which gives to Riemenschneider's work at once a bourgeois naturalism and a taste of the macabre.

Würzburg's precedence as the principal centre of sculpture in the Renaissance era was short-lived, since it was quickly followed and eclipsed by Nuremberg, which became the home of the three greatest sculptors whom Germany ever produced : Veit Stoss (c. 1440-1533) ; Adam Kraft (c. 1550-1609) ; and Pieter Vischer the Elder (1455-1529). The first two are unrepresented in London, except by a small wooden Madonna at South Kensington often ascribed to the former. One must go to the Church of St. Laurence in the Mastersingers' city to see the hanging medallion by Stoss, the *Englische Gruss* (the Angel's Greeting), with the figures of Gabriel and Mary carved in an oval framework of wild roses, or the miraculous *Sakramentshäuschen* (Receptacle for the Host) by Adam Kraft in the same church, which soars, in ever-tapering delicacy, to the roof of the church in the form of a huge episcopal crozier.

But more masterly in their art, even than Stoss and Kraft, were Pieter Vischer and his sons Pieter and Hans, who kept up a celebrated foundry in Nuremberg for over fifty years. It has been seen that most German sculptors worked in wood or stone, but Pieter Vischer followed the example of the great Italians and chose bronze as his chief medium. That he himself ever visited Italy is doubtful,¹ but his son Pieter was there about 1505 'for the sake of art' (*Kunst Halb* as an old writer expresses it).

Pieter Vischer's greatest works are the statue of King Arthur in the Hofkirche at Innsbruck, and the Shrine of St. Sebaldus in the Sebalduskirche at Nuremberg, which is famous all the world over for its fantastic Walpurgisnacht

¹ Ghiberti's doors were completed in 1452, three years before the birth of Pieter Vischer ; and Donatello's statue of Gattamelata was finished in the following year.

carvings and its tiny figure of the old master himself, standing, sturdy and business-like, amidst the welter of human creatures, pagan divinities, mermaids, dolphins, centaurs, snails, mice and small deer, with his leather apron girt around him, and holding his hammer and chisel ready for work.

London possesses no original work by Pieter Vischer, though in the court of casts at South Kensington replicas of his Monument to the Archbishop of Magdeburg and Count Otto IV of Hennenberg can be studied. There is, however, at the Victoria and Albert Museum a bronze figure of the 'Christ Child Blessing' from Pieter Vischer's workshop. It is perhaps by Pancraz Labenwolf (1492-1563), Vischer's ardent pupil, in whose work the master's power of accomplishment and sense of compact designing are more than faintly echoed. With Pieter Vischer the true German Renaissance was fulfilled, but with him it also departed. Less than thirty years after his death, the new classic Italian style found its way to the North and the age of Baroque was begun.

PART II

PAINTING

(National Gallery ; National Portrait Gallery ; Victoria and Albert Museum ; Wallace Collection ; Diploma Gallery, Royal Academy ; Courtauld Institute of Art ; Hampton Court)

CHAPTER I

THE SCHOOLS OF TUSCANY, UMBRIA AND LOMBARDY

THE first scene in the drama of Florentine art is set, paradoxically, in Rome, where Pietro Cavallini (*c.* 1250–1320) and Giotto (*c.* 1270–1337), introduced a new epoch in painting to the world. Giotto, in painting, like Niccolò Pisano in sculpture, re-established the truth of nature against the falsities of convention, and, by breaking away from the bonds of the Byzantine tradition, accomplished a miracle.

Giotto, indeed, was the earliest to discover that mere symbolic representation is finite in its interest and that no real intellectual value can be obtained without a basic understanding of the laws of mass and volume. He was, in fact, the first Italian painter to depict figures whose gestures and actions were not the manifestations of wooden formality, but the outcome of an understanding of plastic form. Giotto is not represented in London, but in the National Gallery we have the great 'Madonna and Child' by Masaccio (1401–28), the artist who rose like a phoenix to carry on the Giottesque tradition and gave to Giotto's

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spirit a new lease of life.¹ Masaccio's aim was to introduce the third dimension into paint and thus to bring a new vitality into painting. He knew that height and breadth were only two-thirds of the making of a picture and that to gain the whole effect things must be represented in the round. In this picture of the Virgin and Child we are at once impressed by the sense of volume. The draperies are not indicated by a mere gold line, but the forms are modelled so that we can see the mass beneath the folds.² Like the work of all the great Florentines, this picture is definitely sculpturesque in treatment, and the forms have a distinct solidity. Masaccio was, himself, a student of sculpture, and his forms convey a sense of weight and volume which reflect the study of Ghiberti and Donatello. The design of this picture is noble and intellectual and gives the effect of a great oval, the curves of which are kept in place by the pillars of the throne, which is drawn in such steep perspective that its sides are like massive walls, giving the picture an air of unforgettable majesty. Even the Child has dignity and His Face is clouded by solemn thoughts as He sucks the bitter grape, the presage of the Passion. Form and volume, however, are not Masaccio's sole preoccupations, and, being primarily a painter, his colour-scheme, with its gorgeous ultramarine and crimson, set against a sequence of pallid grey, rose and lilac, is masterly and audacious.

Masaccio was the first Italian painter of the fifteenth century to interpret dynamic form, but one very great

¹ This altarpiece is thought to have influenced Donatello in his last relief, of which there is a small stucco version in the Victoria and Albert Museum.

² The knees of the Virgin are indicated beneath the drapery in so striking a way that the figure assumes the weight and dignity of a great monument. The general pose and conception of the figure seems to find an echo, in modern painting, in the 'Smiling Woman' by Augustus John (Tate Gallery).

colourist preceded him in birth and outlived him in years, *Fra Angelico* (1387-1455). The name of *Fra Angelico* has gone down to history as that of an artist who, above all things, loved beauty and the saintly life, and he is known all the world over for his work in the monastery of S. Marco in Florence where each cell is made joyous by a brilliant celestial painting. His art is a complete reflection of his mind, which saw no evil anywhere, and knew no doubts at all. His blithe religious convictions and his ecstatic confidence in God's loving care are reflected in the predella of the 'Risen Christ attended by Saints and Archangels' in the National Gallery, which, with its supreme beauty of colouring and general air of happiness, is like a glimpse into heaven through a door which has been left ajar. In the centre, Christ, in white robes, holds the banner of the Resurrection. He is surrounded by angels in marvellous array. On the outside panels is a no less gorgeous assembly of saints and martyrs.

Fra Angelico founded no school, but he had one well-known pupil in *Benozzo Gozzoli* (1420-98) whose 'Rape of Helen' hangs near the predella of the Risen Christ in the National Gallery. This picture possesses a freshness of colour which reminds us of *Angelico*, but it has, also, a flippancy which we cannot associate with the master. Although *Gozzoli* inherited something of his master's brilliance, the significance of his painting is often superficial. Here the story of the Rape of Helen is portrayed in an almost frivolous fashion. But Helen has more than once inspired levity in art, and here we have an early example of her fantastic story conceived in the terms of *opéra-bouffe*.

Fra Angelico and his pupil were light-hearted spirits who, although responding to the general trend of scientific form, were unruffled by the disturbing problems which *Masaccio* had set for his contemporaries. But *Masaccio*'s

immediate successors set themselves to extend his discoveries, and studied with intensity the intricacies of perspective, mathematics and anatomy, laying thereby a firm foundation of scientific knowledge upon which subsequent artists could build.

Masaccio's monumental dignity was his alone, but his power of rendering the strength and substance of the human body was passed on to Andrea dal Castagno (1410?–57), a rare artist whose pictures are few even in Florence. Our 'Crucifixion' in the National Gallery is a possession of the highest value. Despite its tiny panel, this picture has the grandeur of great drama. The atmosphere is charged with the presage of tremendous happenings; the Crosses loom upon the scene and the iron sky is traversed by writhing corkscrew clouds. Andrea dal Castagno was a painter inclined towards grim vehemence and overwrought emotion, and here we have the epitome of his art.

Andrea dal Castagno, although deeply interested in the relative values of form, was not deliberately scientific. For science consciously applied to art we have to turn to Paolo Uccello (1397–1475) whose 'Battle Scene' representing the defeat of the Sienese by the Florentines at San Romano in 1432, is one of the chief attractions of the National Gallery. The fascination of this picture lies in its scientific aim; the painter had long meditated upon the problems of perspective and he wished to instil into his work his knowledge of artistic mathematics. The 'Rout of San Romano', indeed, is not intended as a piece of realism, but as an exercise in scientific decoration, and it should not be considered as any more actual in representation than a piece of needlework or a strip of tapestry. The actuality of the scene, indeed, is not the artist's concern; in his zeal for mastering the acrobatics of draughtsmanship he forgot local colour, and would paint his cities blue and his horses green or pink, as the spirit moved him.

Uccello's equal in mathematical preoccupation, but his antithesis in personality, was Piero della Francesca (1416?–92). Like Uccello, Piero was an ardent scientist and was recognized as one of the finest mathematicians of his time. As an artist, Piero was more gifted than Uccello and he had none of Paolo's whimsicality. His true master was Masaccio; he inherited much of Masaccio's formal majesty and dignified restrained beauty. But Piero's art is less sensed with tragedy than Masaccio's; it is, indeed, completely impersonal, and has an impassive dignity and spiritual aloofness which remove it from the plane of our everyday emotions and make it sacrosanct and unapproachable.

It is to the personal advocacy of Disraeli that the National Gallery owes its possession of the *Nativity*, a picture which shows Piero in his most gracious mood and reveals his consummate skill as a designer, with its composition most learnedly built upon sweeping curves, kept in place by a counterplay of verticals and horizontals. The scene, too, is beautifully conceived. The gentle Virgin worships the Child to the accompaniment of an angel choir, whilst, in the stable, the paean is swelled by the lowing and braying of the ox and ass. In this picture, the artist for once allows a personal note to enter and Christmas morning is being celebrated in a stable on a hill from which can be seen the spires of Borgo San Sepulcro, the artist's native city. The marmoreal calm which pervades all Piero's work is especially impressive in the picture of 'The Baptism' (Pl. VII), where, in the pallid light of morning, Christ stands in Jordan to receive His initiation by St. John.

In the *Baptism*, Piero experiments with perspective almost as Uccello did and he delights in making the river thread its way in tapering, serpentine lines. But again his aim inclines towards that of Masaccio rather than to

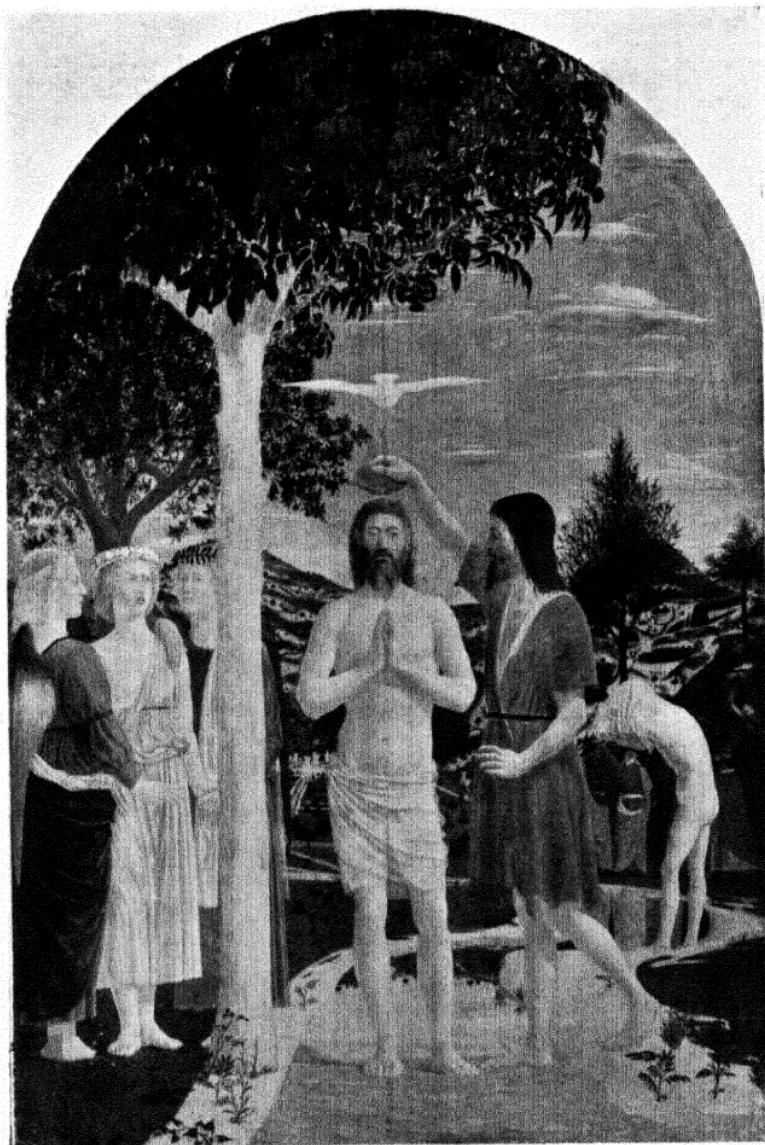
that of Uccello; his figures are not vehicles for playful inventiveness, but are constructed with the perfection and immobility of marble statuary. The colours, too, heighten the sculptural effect and the recurrent chilly notes of white, blue and grey would almost freeze the picture into soullessness were it not for the interpolation of so humorous and natural an incident as that of the man taking off his shirt beside the water's edge.

Piero della Francesca founded no school, but he had two pupils in whose work something of his quality survives: Melozzo da Forli (1438-94) and Luca Signorelli.

In Luca Signorelli (1441-1523) is heralded the complete achievement of the Renaissance. Although the pupil of Piero, he lacks repose and delights in crowding huge wall-spaces with gigantic nude figures whirling in violent action.¹ The 'Circumcision', however, in the National Gallery is a masterpiece of restrained emotion and noble grouping, and in more than one respect it foreshadows Michelangelo. The medallions of the Sibyls on the arch, which crowns the group, made an impression on Raphael and Michelangelo, and the draperies have that noble, heroic quality which we find again in the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel. The 'Circumcision' is a majestic work, but it hardly compensates for the fact that nineteenth-century prudery lost for our Gallery the great picture of Pan (now in the Kaiser Friedrich Museum, Berlin), which shows the goat-footed god and his fellow-immortals listening to music in the hush of a sapphire twilight, under a crescent moon.

For his deep understanding of human anatomy Signorelli owed much to the greatest anatomists of the day, the brothers Antonio and Piero Pollaiuolo (1432-98; 1443-96), whose famous work, the 'Martyrdom of Saint Sebastian', hangs as a companion to Signorelli's 'Circumcision' in

¹ Cf. 'The Last Judgment' at Orvieto.



THE BAPTISM

Piero della Francesca. National Gallery



A BOY READING
Vincenzo Foppa (?). Wallace Collection

the National Gallery. This picture of the Pollaiuoli is arid in attraction and seems like an academic trick in the science of aesthetics. The pyramidal design is strained and formal ; the facial expressions are grotesque and the colours have darkened to a dirty brown, which makes the picture heavy and clumsy, and of a kind that we pass quickly by. But as a realization of the Florentine aim to marry science to art, the ' Saint Sebastian ' could hardly be excelled. The artist-brothers have analysed every portion of the human body, with the consequent effects of movement upon the muscles and tendons. The stooping figure in the foreground, with his back towards us, is foreshortened in a way that would have made Uccello envious.

We have now followed the current of Florentine art from Giotto to the Pollaiuoli, and we have seen that it has flowed steadily through the channels of science. The problems of forms and perspective, the suggestions of mass, solidity and action ; and the study of the bulk, weight and activity of the human figure have all been the main preoccupations of Florentine artists. Sculpture, indeed, was the dominant art in early Renaissance Florence, and the aim of the first generation of painters was to express the ideals of sculpture in paint.

But up to now, in spite of the complete realization of form, one element is lacking which is essential to an art from which we may derive complete pleasure : that of tenderness or sentiment, and for the earliest signs of this new feeling we have to turn to the first of the great Umbrians, Pietro Perugino (1446-1523). Piero della Francesca, Melozzo da Forli and Signorelli were all from Umbria by nationality, but they worked so closely on Florentine principles that they must be aesthetically counted in the ranks of the Florentines. Perugino, however, was a complete Umbrian, and rose like a new star in the artistic heaven. Though his powers of invention

are limited, his types and gestures monotonous, though his drawing is often feeble and his sentiment cloying, he brought into art a new element of tenderness and grace and a feeling for space and atmosphere which has seldom been surpassed. In spite of his frequent insipidity, Perugino's advent into the sphere of art must be considered as very happy, since he was the first member of a new and great generation of artists ; and to head a generation which was to be the supreme glory of the world is no small honour.

Perugino's triptych of the 'Madonna Adoring the Child' in the National Gallery is one of the most popular pictures in the collection and its appeal lies, not as most people think in the neatly poised design or the sweet expressions of the faces, or even in the technical perfection of the details such as the fish carried by Tobias, but in the suggestion of space and the open air which was Perugino's greatest contribution to the arts. Even Raphael, his pupil, could not set landscape to a more delightful use than Perugino sets it in his triptych, where the eye, after having admired the symmetrical pattern of line and carefully blended colour, is led away over a pleasant expanse of fields, river and valleys to the far-distant horizon which melts into a quiet, turquoise sky.

Among Perugino's fellow-countrymen and contemporaries, Pinturicchio (1454-1513) was distinguished for his decorative painting which reflects the splendour and elegance of living prevalent amongst the great gentlemen and humanists of his time. Pinturicchio possessed the vitality which Perugino lacked, and his famous frescoes at Siena are filled with lively, bustling figures. Our picture in the National Gallery of the 'Return of Ulysses' is a fine example of the artist's decorative power and talent for composition. The lines of Penelope's loom and those of the tessellated floor lead one's eyes immediately to the

window, where we see a few of the adventures that befell Ulysses before he put into port at Ithaca. On the left is the island of the enchantress Circe who has turned some of the companions into swine, whilst farther to the right we see the ship of Ulysses ploughing its way through the syren-infested waters with the hero bound to the mast. The picture's foreground is the scene of rapid action, and Ulysses appears in the doorway in the nick of time to save Penelope from the attentions of the suitors, who include among their number a gentleman from the Orient and an effeminate young man with a hawk.

The art of these Umbrian painters is more serene and less intellectual than that of their contemporaries in Florence, where excitement at each new turn of science was far too prevalent to allow room for artists who accepted the current knowledge as complacently as did Perugino. One great painter, however, in fifteenth-century Florence, Lippo Lippi, was content to rest upon the bank and to watch the stream of new discovery flow past him. Fra Filippo Lippi (1406 ?-69) contributed little to technical invention and preferred reality to theory ; his marriage with the nun Lucrezia Buti made his name the centre of scandal in Florence, but his pictures are unworldly and his name is always associated with appealing Madonnas and playful children. The well-known lunette in the National Gallery of the Annunciation is an admirable example of Fra Filippo's art, with its tasteful grouping, its rich, molten colouring, and its delicacy of technique such as can be seen especially in the quivering golden glory which issues from the Hand of God, as He directs the dove to the Virgin.

Fra Filippo's most famous pupil, Alessandro Botticelli (1444-1510), inherited practically nothing of his master's style ; his art is scarcely ever pretty ; his drawing is not always without fault and his types do not attract the world.

Yet as an artist, Botticelli is incomparable and has achieved a position in men's esteem which leaves Fra Lippo Lippi far behind. Botticelli's art is almost entirely calligraphic and it is through line that he communicates his thrilling sense of touch and movement. The fluttering draperies and dancing waves which have made his 'Birth of Venus' the most beloved of pictures are, technically, no more than a sequence of infinitely beautiful linear arabesques.

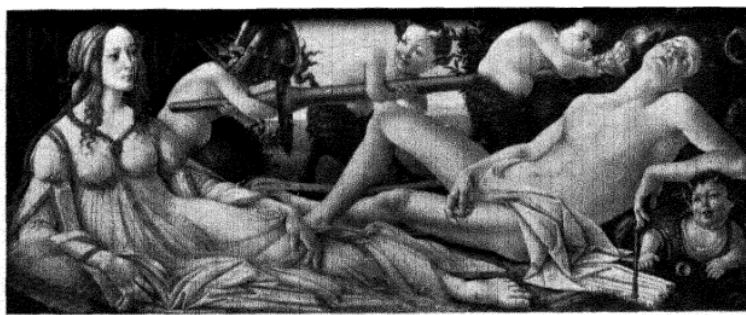
In the National Gallery almost every phase of Botticelli's varied art is represented; we see him as a portrait painter and as a portrayer of pagan and religious subjects. Our 'Young Man' reveals Botticelli as a masterly painter of portraits, and its incisive vision into character has given it popularity and repute. But the reason of the portrait's vividness is not at once apparent, and the inexperienced observer might fail to notice that it is not by colour or by modelling, but by line, that the artist communicates his stimulus. The eyelids, the features, and even the locks of hair are all drawn with clear-cut, swift lines which charge the picture with the electricity of life.

In the National Gallery we have no tapestry-like decoration such as the Uffizi 'Primavera', but our 'Mars and Venus' (Pl. IX (b)) does not fall far short of the more famous 'Birth of Venus' in its symphonic line and its poetic interpretation of classical legend.¹ Here we see the god and goddess reclining, exhausted, in the aftermath of love, but their repose is interrupted by four little Satyrs whose pranks should surely disturb the God of War far more than the emblematic hornets' nest upon which he rests.

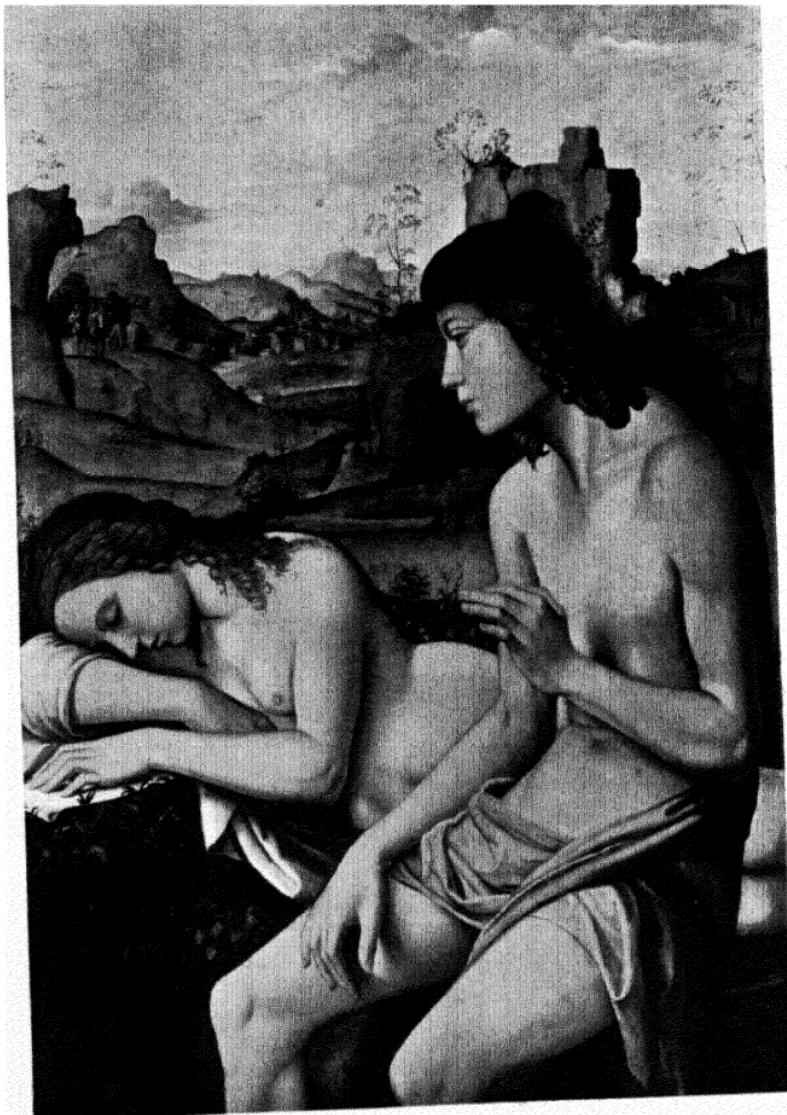
¹ Botticelli's calligraphic characteristics are unique, but an approaching quality is seen in the delightful 'Idyll' (Pl. X) in the Wallace Collection by Bianchi Ferrari (1460-1510), a minor artist of the school of Modena. This picture fittingly comes from a half-way city between Florence and Venice, for its style combines the clear-cut contours of Botticelli with the vague, half-conscious lassitude of Giorgione's tranquil dream.



(a) THE DEATH OF PROCRIS
Piero di Cosimo National Gallery



(b) MARS AND VENUS
Botticelli. National Gallery



AN IDYLL
Bianchi Ferrari. Wallace Collection

his head. Again Botticelli delights us by his linear pattern and the figures of the lovers make a lovely crescent curve described upon the lance which the mischievous children are bearing away.

Botticelli's models for this most moving expression of the ecstasy of physical love were Giuliano de' Medici and his mistress Simonetta, whose beauty was so great that at her death her body was carried through the streets of Florence with her face uncovered. But, like all the women in Botticelli's pictures, her beauty is of a solemn kind and a smile on her face would seem unfitting. Botticelli's gravity, indeed, grew with him, and his later work is impregnated with an increasing sense of sadness. Even our popular tondo 'The Madonna and Child' (National Gallery), with its circular design in which all lines revolve around the Christ-Child's face, has a foreboding melancholy from which there is no escape, and the more famous Nativity is one of the most solemn pictures ever painted. In his later years, Botticelli set aside his Renaissance gaiety and became a follower of Savonarola. To comply with the preacher's admonishments, he renounced his pagan subjects and threw his studies of the nude upon the bonfire of vanities. In these last years, Botticelli's pictures became rarer and rarer, and his art became entirely mystical. Our Nativity is completely symbolic of Botticelli's later mood and bears an inscription referring to a prophecy of Savonarola that the Devil will finally be trodden down.¹ But, despite these solemn reflections, Botticelli was not yet deaf to the magic flute of joyous inspiration, and his sense of vital line returns to him in his garland of dancing angels, who circle above the pent-house roof and swing their crowns in an exuberance of joy.

Botticelli's most distinguished pupil was Filippino Lippi

¹ At the base of the picture the prophecy is being realized, and Devils are fleeing underground from the approach of Angels.

(1457-1504), the son of Fra Filippo and the nun Lucrezia. His works, through their facile technique, exercise a peculiar charm, which has made the 'Angel Adoring' in the National Gallery one of the most popular of pictures. But his figures lack substance and his types are often effeminate; it is, indeed, difficult to imagine that he, out of all the artists in Florence, was chosen to complete Masaccio's epoch-making frescoes in the Brancacci Chapel. A finer but less popular work than the 'Angel Adoring' is the large altarpiece of the 'Madonna with SS. Jerome and Dominic' in the National Gallery. Here Filippino has exceeded his usual meed of accomplishment and has given his figures a nobility of bearing that we should associate with Signorelli. Some reason may well be looked for to account for Filippino's change of style, and Sir Charles Holmes¹ is of the opinion that it was due to the impression left on the artist by the sight of two works by Leonardo da Vinci: the unfinished 'Adoration of the Magi' in the Uffizi and the Louvre version of the 'Virgin of the Rocks.'

Filippino's contemporary who came most closely under his influence was Piero di Cosimo (1462-1521), a fantastic, brutish creature of whom Vasari has much that is amusing to say. Midway through his life, Piero became a complete recluse and would allow no one near his house, not even the gardener to prune the fruit-trees in his orchard. His table was of the most frugal and he lived on hard-boiled eggs which he used to cook at the rate of fifty at a time in the water used for the heating of his size. His brain became a kaleidoscope of curious fancies. Vasari tells us that he used to stop to examine a wall against which people had spat, imagining that he saw in its markings, combats of horses or extraordinary landscapes.

Freaks of nature and the idea of death became obsessions

¹ *The National Gallery*, vol. I, p. 67.

with Piero ; he used to delight in seeing or imagining strange animals and he devised a Car of Death which amazed all Florence by its novelty and grim character. In the National Gallery, the 'Death of Procris' (Pl. IX (a)) admirably supports Vasari's legend, for in it we find all manner of strange birds and beasts. But this beautiful picture is not a mere vehicle for quixotic invention, for it touches on the eternal significances of Life and Death. The bride Procris is dying through her husband's jealousy roused by the evil rumour of Aurora, and she is attended in death by a Satyr who has crept from the undergrowth to watch her dying moments, and by the dog Laelaps whose silent sorrow is more eloquent than human speech.

Even such accomplished masters of painting as Piero di Cosimo and the Lippi pale away before the triumvirate of unapproachable giants : Leonardo, Raphael and Michelangelo, who introduced a new era in painting and achieved in a few strokes of the brush all that Florentine science had been striving for centuries to attain.

For the study of Leonardo and his fellow-workers the scene must shift from Florence to Milan.

Comparatively few of the painters who form the Milanese school were natives of Milan, and the first of the line of notable visitors to Lombardy who stimulated there an interest in painting was Vincenzo Foppa of Brescia (1427-1515-16). Foppa was a painter of learning and experience, and his large 'Adoration of the Kings' in the National Gallery is a fine essay in decoration, with its rich colour effect and imposing architectural design. But the picture has a pomposity which detracts from its appeal, and students of Vincenzo Foppa go, for pleasure, not to the National Gallery, but to the Wallace Collection, where hangs the celebrated 'Boy Reading' (Pl. VIII).

This delightful work has undergone many changes of nomenclature ; it was originally thought to be by Braman-

tino, and the old title was 'Pico della Mirandola', a name naturally associative with a picture of a young scholar. Later, Foppa's authorship was suggested, and the picture was known as the 'Youthful Gian Galeazzo Sforza Reading Cicero'. The identity of the sitter, however, is uncertain, but he must surely have been a boy of wealthy or noble parents, for the room in which he is absorbed in study has the air of a palace library and its window gives on to a well-ordered garden. The painting, which is a fresco on plaster, was cut from the wall of a bank (the Banco Mediceo) in an old palace in Milan; the structure had been changed in the course of time and this painting, high up on the wall and very dirty, was thought to have some connexion with the bank; perhaps the portrait of a business man in his office.

The 'Boy Reading' is a deservedly popular work and might be taken as emblematic of the Italian Renaissance, when a desire for study came to young and old, and even children joined in the search for the hidden treasures of the Classics.

Gian Galeazzo Sforza, if the suggested identity be correct, was the son of Galeazzo Maria Sforza and Bona of Savoy. Portraits of both his parents are to be found in London: that of his father is to be seen in the Wallace Collection in the illumination on vellum by Cristoforo da Predis, whilst a portrait of his mother, a lady of much learning, by Ambrogio da Predis, (c. 1455-1506) hangs in the National Gallery.

Ambrogio da Predis's greatest claim to remembrance is that he was the partner of Leonardo da Vinci, but this collaboration was also his misfortune, for he was totally eclipsed by his great colleague. Who, indeed, when such marvels are performed, gives a thought to the magician's assistant?

Leonardo da Vinci (1452-1519), the love-child of a

peasant-girl from the village of Vinci and a rich notary of Florence, was Hercules, Apollo and Orpheus in one. Vasari tells us that his strength was such that he could bend an iron ring or horse-shoe between his fingers and that he was so beautiful of person that none could describe his charm or pay a fitting tribute to his grace and persuasion. He was a musician, too. The Duke of Milan sent for him to play upon his lute, which was an instrument of silver, fashioned like a horse's head and tuned according to its player's self-discovered acoustic laws. To the accompaniment of the lute Leonardo used to improvise *canzoni* and sing them for the ducal pleasure.

Leonardo da Vinci is among the most complete men who have ever lived : he was painter, sculptor, poet, musician, maker of musical instruments, philosopher, engineer, geologist, and the prophet of modern inventions. Art and science were indissolubly married in his work ; and both were subservient to his bizarre originality. Invention poured from Leonardo's brain as words from a fluent orator : he invented machinery for water-mills and aqueducts ; devised engines of war ; discovered the secret of rifle bullets ; conceived the idea of a paddle-steamer ; evolved systems for walking on the water ; and reconstructed the system of irrigation in the plains of Lombardy. His drawings, too, of flying-machines were prophetic in their possibilities and foreshadowed modern methods of air-travel.

Only fragments of Leonardo's life are known ; we are certain that he served in Milan under Cesare Borgia, for whom he worked as engineer and as organizer of the ducal fêtes and pageants ; and we know that he was invited to France by François I, who gave him as a residence the little Château of Clou with a vineyard and a pleasant garden overlooking the walls of Amboise. Beyond these two cardinal points Leonardo's life is wrapped in legend.

His character, however, is surely known to have been one of infinite compassion, and he had a deep feeling for all things that have life.) As he walked the streets of Florence, he used to buy caged birds and set them free. At the sight too, of a swarm of bees being drowned, he was moved to pity, and the spectacle of a calf being taken from its mother to the slaughter-house made him cry out in the name of justice. (The sufferings of children, also, caught the artist's attention, and he protested against the tight, unhygienic, swaddling-bands of babies. Yet, along with his humanity, Leonardo had a taste for the grotesque and there is a much-recounted story that one day he brought into his room a collection of reptiles—lizards, newts, toads, efts and vipers—and, choosing some part of each, composed a creature so terrible that all who saw it shuddered.)

A profound philosopher, Leonardo committed many of his thoughts to paper and his *Treatise on Painting*, first printed in 1651, was widely read. His note-books, too, are a source of infinite interest and rival Pascal's *Pensées* in their searching truths. Pascal and Leonardo, indeed, although more than a century divides them, had many points in common; both men were mathematicians and inventors¹ and both loved to meditate on the mysteries of the Universe. But, whereas to Leonardo the infinity of Nature was a measureless wonder, to Blaise Pascal it was a source of terror, since he confessed that the eternal silence of limitless space appalled him into fear. ("Le silence éternel de ces espaces infinis m'effraie.")

As a painter, Leonardo is extremely rare, and there are

¹ Pascal, before the age of twelve, had worked out all the elementary problems of Euclid for himself; at sixteen, he wrote a treatise on conic sections; later, he invented a ready reckoner, wrote a treatise on the equilibrium of fluids, and was the first to conceive the idea of a public conveyance, the prototype of the omnibus.

only about twelve pictures and a few bundles of drawings¹ which can authentically be ascribed to his name. The reason for this rarity is a double one and depends partly on the political position in Italy, made uncertain through the invasions of the French, and partly on the experimental nature of Leonardo's mind, with his passion for making new mixtures of paint and for trying new media. The tragedy to posterity is that, out of Leonardo's work, that which has not disappeared entirely has been ruined by the course of time. All his sculpture has been lost (except for a few uncertain pieces of his youth, such as the group in the Victoria and Albert Museum, cf. p. 7) and the greater part of his paintings. Those that have survived, particularly the 'Last Supper' at Milan,² are in such a calamitous condition that they are ghosts of their former selves.

London, then, is especially fortunate in possessing two great pictures by the master, and one less ambitious work in which it is permissible to speculate that he had a hand, as well as a number of drawings and three sketch-books.³

The least known, but perhaps the most beautiful example of Leonardo's art in London is the chalk Cartoon of the Madonna and Saint Anne (Pl. XI (a)) in the Diploma Gallery at the Royal Academy.⁴ Until this work was exhibited at the Italian Exhibition of 1930, the London public was almost entirely ignorant of its great possession, and even then a large proportion of those who flocked to see it failed to realize that the only journey it had taken was down the Academy staircase. Even the most inexperienced observer can catch something of the beauty which

¹ Some of his finest drawings are in the British Museum. Three of his note-books are in the Victoria and Albert Museum.

² A sixteenth-century copy of the 'Last Supper' by Marco Oggiono is in the Diploma Gallery, Royal Academy.

³ For the drawings and sketch-books cf. Part III, ch. I, p. 105.

⁴ The finished picture is in the Louvre.

radiates from the Madonna's face, but to those whose interest lies in the intricacies of draughtsmanship, the Cartoon is of immeasurable value with its ready exposition of Leonardo's miraculous curves and strokes.]

As a boy, Leonardo worked in the studio of Verrocchio where, says Vasari, he modelled certain heads of women smiling. We know, also, that in this studio, he was allowed to paint the angel in the left-hand corner of Verrocchio's great Baptism (now in the Uffizi) and it does not seem too extravagant to suppose that he helped in the execution of the 'Madonna with Angels' in the National Gallery, in which the handling of the landscape closely resembles Leonardo's first dated drawings. The exquisite figure, too, of the foremost angel has a perfection of technique and composition of which few but Leonardo were capable.

One of the rarest treasures in London is Leonardo's 'Virgin of the Rocks' in the National Gallery, although its authenticity has more than once been questioned and the suggestion has been raised that it is a contemporary copy, by a pupil, of the version in the Louvre. But the picture has not suffered from these assertions; it passes at intervals behind the clouds of disparagement only to emerge again, triumphant, into the sunlight of acceptance. Now, however, prejudice can be the only reason for doubt, since records of a lawsuit, raised by the monks for whom the picture was commissioned, have been found and traces of the original *pentimenti* have been shown up by the X-ray, which make the theory of the copyist impossible. But material evidence seems hardly necessary to refute the theory of pupil's work, and such a masterpiece of painting as the upturned sole of the Child's foot should be enough to make the suggested authority of Ambrogio da Predis inconceivable.

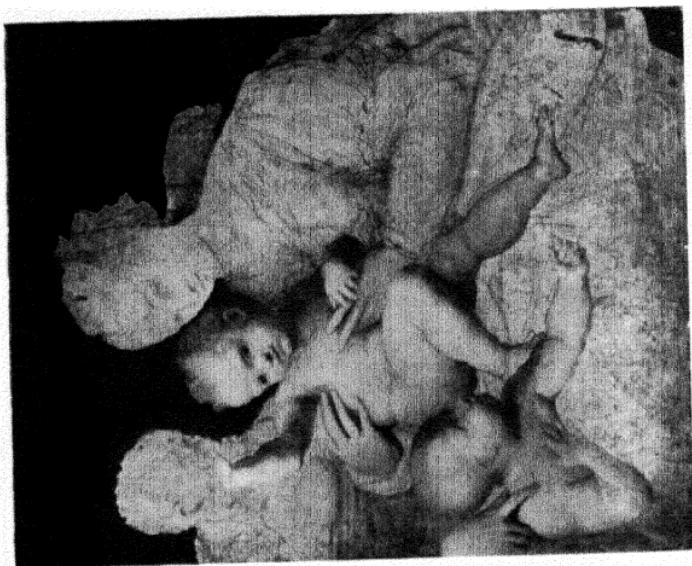
As with all Leonardo's paintings, Time and the master's



(a) MADONNA AND CHILD WITH ST. ANNE
Leonardo da Vinci. Royal Academy



(b) THE MIRACULOUS DRAUGHT OF FISHES
Raphael. Victoria & Albert Museum



(b) MADONNA AND CHILD
Bartolomeo. Courtauld Institute of Art



(a) MADONNA AND CHILD WITH ST. JOHN
AND ANGELS
Michelangelo. National Gallery

own passion for science and experiment have been this picture's ruin, since the Virgin is now seated in a cavern of almost impenetrable blackness. Many suggestions have been raised as to the significance of this mysterious setting and some have tried to trace it to childhood impressions in the grottoes of Gonfalino. But recent opinion has it that science is again responsible for Leonardo's action, and that this landscape is a reflection of his knowledge of the primeval world of which the open expression would have been impossible at the time when the first thunderings of the Reformation had been heard. Leonardo's geological studies had brought him near the theory of evolution and he knew well that the plains of Lombardy were once washed by the waters of the Adriatic. But to avoid a heretic's fate, he kept these mysteries to himself and reserved them for note-books, or the cryptic backgrounds of pictures or, even more, for his own secret thoughts.

(Meditations upon the past and future were Leonardo's constant preoccupation and he loved to grapple with the conception of eternity. Although he compared the life of man with the flame of a candle, he did not intend the simile to convey the idea of a sudden extinction, but rather that of a vital force which, though continually used up, could be constantly revived. A desire to penetrate mysteries, indeed, was ever present with Leonardo and his preoccupation with eternal problems gave him his universality. (Although a product of the Renaissance, and a typical example of its learning, wizardry and versatility, Leonardo was not the outcome of any special period. He was like Shakespeare, transcendent over his own epoch. Like Shakespeare, he belongs to all the ages.)

Of Leonardo's imitators, the most ardent was Bernardino Luini (c. 1475-1532) whose passion for his master's work usually reduced him to the depths of imitative sentimentality. But when Luini deserted his stereotyped

Madonna pictures for the broader art of Fresco, he left the sickly sweet behind him and assumed a decorative charm. There is in the Wallace Collection a portion of a fresco transferred to canvas, 'A Child Genius Gathering Grapes', which in its blending of the qualities of tapestry and mosaic, has a rich, decorative effect, and a sense of formal pattern.

The year 1483, in which Leonardo went to Milan, is the year of the birth of Raphael of Urbino (1483-1520) to whom the liberality of Providence again entrusted an incomparable store of riches. Like Leonardo, Raphael was gifted with an inexhaustible fertility and unwearied industry, and although no musician, possessed the other qualities of Orpheus to an even greater degree than the elder painter. All men, according to Vasari, succumbed to the spell of his personality, and even the animals of the wayside would follow him.

Raphael, like Leonardo, started life at a disadvantage, although his misfortune was not one of birth but of domicile. The son of a painter, Raphael early absorbed an artistic influence. But it was short-lived, and he was left an orphan in his eleventh year. His misfortune, however, was to have spent his early youth in Umbria instead of in Florence; at Urbino there was much culture, but little stirring influence and Raphael had no workshop like Verrocchio's in which he could find adequate stimulus for his genius. Until the age of twenty-one, Raphael lived away from the trend of Florentine achievement and, when the opportunity came for him to visit Florence, it came late. Although he seized the golden moments with both hands, his health would not stand the strain of superhuman effort, and he died at the age of thirty-seven.

The reputation of Raphael as an epoch-making genius is so widespread that many people find his succession of lovely Madonnas unproportional to the range of his

renown. But, like the mulberry-tree, Raphael matured late, and it was during the last decade of his life, when he was in Rome assisting in the decoration of the Vatican, that he transformed himself from an accomplished master into a great and transcendental painter.

It is only in Rome that a full appreciation of Raphael's powers can be gained. In Trafalgar Square his masterpieces are several, but they are mostly examples of the painter's early style. At South Kensington, however, is the series of cartoons which carry us one step further towards the final stage.

The loveliest of Raphael's early works in the National Gallery is the 'Crucifixion'. Here we see the artist's achievement at the age of eighteen (the picture is dated 1501), when he was the pupil of Perugino, working in a style almost indistinguishable from that of his master. In this picture Raphael has borrowed two of the most characteristic elements of Perugino's art: his spacious landscape and equipoised design; but the result is inspiration, not mere imitation, and we may well marvel at the way in which the youth could paint a distant city under an Italian sky, whose tones range from sapphire to the palest turquoise.

An even earlier work in the National Gallery than the 'Crucifixion' is the 'Vision of a Knight' which shows Raphael at the age of sixteen already a master of line and figure-drawing in the fashion of Timoteo Viti, who preceded Perugino as Raphael's tutor in the arts. This little rhythmic masterpiece, in which a Knight, sleeping beneath a bay-tree, dreams of the rival temptations of Piety and Venus, is the result of careful preparation, as is proved by the pen-and-ink cartoon which hangs below it, showing the lines meticulously dotted with pin-holes, through which an outline tracing was pounced on to the panel, made ready with a luminous white gesso.

When Raphael came to Florence, he set himself to absorb the problems of mass and movement which had been the Florentines' preoccupation for near upon two centuries. But the influence of Perugino was not easy to cast off and the famous *Ansidei Madonna* in the National Gallery, although a product of Raphael's Florentine period, is, at first sight, almost as like his master's work as is the Mond 'Crucifixion' and, as Sir Charles Holmes has pointed out, seems scarcely to differ in conception and style from Perugino's 'Holy Family with Saint Anne' (now in the Museum of Marseilles). But Raphael had not lived in Tuscany to no avail ; the figure of S. Nicholas has a dignity and fullness of modelling which Perugino would never have achieved, and the picture has a simplicity of design and paucity of figures which indicate Raphael's quick response to the tempering influence of Florentine restraint.

Raphael's years in Florence were disappointing, and his work for a time lost its early freshness and showed no signs of definite progression. Partly responsible for this stand-still was the influence of Fra Bartolommeo (1472-1517), an artist who put dexterity before design and the rigid rules of the Academy before genuine inspiration. Fra Bartolommeo's figures, very often, lack fullness of modelling and are merely formally-posed dummies clothed in a frippery of meaningless drapery.¹

When Raphael left Florence for Rome in 1508, he had done little to exceed the accomplishment of a masterly painter who had an eye for a sweet face, but in the Eternal

¹ An exceptionally fine work, however, by Fra Bartolommeo in London is the 'Madonna and Child' (Pl. XII (b)) recently given by the National Art Collections Fund to the Courtauld Institute of Art (20 Portman Square). It was formerly in the Northwick Collection. Its unfinished state makes it an admirable acquisition for an Institute of Fine Arts, where the study of technical methods and the various stages, which constitute the making of pictures, is part of the students' curriculum.

City he was confronted with the achievements of classical art. His absorption of Florentine influence had made its mark ; the spell of Rome soon worked upon him and he became an ardent student of the antique. In his decoration of the Vatican, Raphael became the classic painter and his 'Parnassus' and the 'School of Athens' enthroned him beside Michelangelo.

The National Gallery possesses no reflection of Raphael's crowning genius, although the much-damaged 'Madonna of the Tower', with its lovely rounded forms and the juxtaposed ovals of the faces, gives some indication of Raphael's later enlargement of style and comes near to the dignity of the Sistine Madonna.

The Cartoons, however, in the Victoria and Albert Museum, distinctly echo the splendour of the Vatican frescoes on which Raphael's greatest fame depends. These seven cartoons were designed by Raphael and executed by him and his assistants at the commission of Leo X for tapestries to be manufactured by Pieter van Aelst in Brussels for the Sistine Chapel. The cartoons were finished towards the end of the year 1516 and the whole series of tapestries was completed by the year 1520.¹ The tapestries now hang, after many changes, in the new Art Gallery at the Vatican. The cartoons are lent to South Kensington by His Majesty the King ; they entered the Royal Collection under Charles I, who bought them on the advice of Rubens, for the use of the tapestry-makers at Mortlake. The most famous of the Cartoons, the 'Miraculous Draught of Fishes' (Pl. XI (b)) brings us into a world far removed

¹ Three of the cartoons are lost. Of these two tapestries remain ('The Stoning of Stephen' and 'Conversion of Paul' : modern copies hang with the cartoons in the Victoria and Albert Museum) and part of the third. In Sir John Soane's Museum, Lincoln's Inn Fields, is a supposed fragment of one of the lost cartoons.

from that of the panel pictures in the National Gallery ; its inhabitants are muscular Titans such as we might meet in the realms of Michelangelo, and the wild life consists of cranes and strange sea-birds in the like of which Piero di Cosimo might well have found delight. The spacious landscape background of the cartoon brings us momentarily back to the water-meadows of Umbria, but the figures of the Apostles, who put every muscle of their bared limbs into play as they strive to draw the net, remind us of the anatomical science which only the Classics and the great Florentines could teach. All Raphael's previous experience found its climax in the Cartoons. In each of them, a fresh testimony to Raphael's scientific composition is made manifest and that which may appear at first sight to be an exaggeratedly dramatic gesture is found, after study, to play an essential part in the structure of the whole. In the ' St. Paul Preaching at Athens ' the skilful placing of the figures and the massing of light and shade emphasize the tension with which the preacher holds the crowd. The design, moreover, in the ' St. Paul and Barnabas at Lystra ' is so subtly distributed that Raphael, with hardly more than twenty figures, has given the effect of an immense crowd. A balance, too, between tranquillity and movement is maintained in the ' St. Peter and St. John at the Beautiful Gate of the Temple ', with its tripartal division of motive, in which the stiffness of conventional symmetry is avoided by the introduction of the twisted columns (*columnae vitiniae*) of St. Peter's.

In his final years, Raphael had a mastery of technique which made him the artistic kinsman of Michelangelo, but in character no two men were ever more dissimilar. Unlike Michelangelo, Raphael had a gentle temper and was the soul of modesty. When he first saw Michelangelo's angels on the Sistine Ceiling, a new vista of achievement was opened up to him and, with no bitterness in his heart,

he went straight to the Church of S. Agostino and washed out his own fresco of the Prophet Isaiah to paint it in again in a more noble fashion. Raphael was beloved by all who knew him ; in Rome he was treated more like a prince than an artist and he lived in a palace built by Bramante. Even the dignitaries of the Vatican were his friends ; Cardinal Bibbiena wanted him to marry his niece and Pope Leo X, it is said, offered him a Cardinal's hat. But Raphael's glorious sojourn in Rome was only a brief artistic springtime, and many of his projects remained unfulfilled. The gods had different plans for Raphael of Urbino and, like all whom Olympus favours, they doomed him to die young.

The figure who bestrides the age of the High Renaissance like a Colossus is Michelangelo Buonarroti (1475-1564). Michelangelo was the pupil and the heir of none, but the miraculous fulfilment of the truest Florentine tradition. With him the seed which brought forth Giotto and Masaccio flowered for the third and final time.

Of easel pictures Michelangelo left but three unfinished works ; of these one is in the Uffizi and two, to the Londoner's good fortune, are in our National Gallery. The earlier of our two possessions, the 'Madonna and Child with St. John and Angels' (Pl. XII (a)) is sculpture in paint. Michelangelo was a sculptor born and bred ; and from his earliest boyhood he had learnt to wield the chisel. In our picture he set his forms upon a flat background in order to make them stand out, through the very completeness of their modelling, like the carved figures of a bas-relief. There is scarcely a passage in the picture which does not possess the serenity and clear-cut perfection of classical sculpture. The Virgin is a noble figure with a dignity akin to that of Masaccio's Madonna, but her majesty is tempered by a sweetness which Masaccio could never have portrayed. The angels, too, possess some-

thing of Our Lady's grandeur and in the faces of the two taller angels standing on the right it would seem that the artist had reached the ultimate point in the representation of beauty. The picture, however, is not mere sculptor's work and those who are interested in colour and design can find infinite fascination in its delicate opposition of widely contrasting tones and its geometric interweaving of lines.

It is almost impossible to imagine that the painter of the 'Madonna with Saints and Angels' was a boy of nineteen years, but youth and immaturity seem even further removed from our almost contemporary 'Entombment' which gives us a foretaste of Michelangelo's herculean creations in the Sistine Chapel.

The artist has infused his picture with an extraordinary suggestion of bodily strength. The Magdalene and St. John exercise terrific efforts to keep taut the bands which support the body of Christ, made limp and heavy by death. The feeling of physical energy, too, is intensified by the mathematical composition, with its sectional patterns of horizontals and diagonals arising from the monolithic figures, in the foreground, of Salome and the Virgin.

The atmosphere of the Entombment is one of intense suffering, but its idea hardly complies with that of the Gospel story. The morning of the Resurrection could never rise upon this fatal burial-scene. It is a catastrophic *Götterdämmerung*; an Entombment of the Gods.

Beside Michelangelo, even monumental artists appear as pygmies, and to pass from him to such a distinguished painter even as Correggio seems an absurdly sudden reduction of scale.

Antonio Allegri (1494-1534), known after his birth-place as Il Correggio, is a marvel among painters for, although he remained a provincial all his life, he produced work which raised him above the standard of brilliance to

a place hardly inferior to that of the peerless artists. For a Michelangelo to have arisen in Florence or a Raphael in Umbria was the outcome of natural events, but for a Correggio to have appeared in the humdrum, isolated principality of the Emilia, apart from the society of scholars and artists and where the patronage of princes was unknown, was a phenomenon which we shall never understand.

Correggio's distinguishing characteristic was his sensibility to feminine charm and no picture could better epitomize this trait than our 'Madonna of the Basket' in the National Gallery.¹ In this tiny masterpiece of sheer attractiveness, we have left Florentine science and the spirit of classicism far behind. The Virgin is no Pallas Athene in the Michelangelesque tradition, nor even a stately maiden of Urbino such as Raphael would have loved to make her, but a pretty young Mother playing with her Child, who wriggles into His coat with charming human obstinacy.

The piquant beauty of Correggio's women is more French than Italian in character, and we cannot but feel that had François I ever seen our 'Mercury Instructing Cupid before Venus' in the National Gallery, he would have carried the artist straight off to Fontainebleau. In the course of centuries, indeed, the spell of Correggio did spread to France, and in the early nineteenth century Pierre-Paul Prud'hon identified himself with the Correggiesque manner.

François I, in his search for Italian artists, never penetrated into Correggio's seclusion, but he did discover Andrea del Sarto (1486-1531), famous in the National Gallery for his 'Portrait of a Sculptor', and Angelo Bronzino (1503-72), who went to the Court of France and exercised a great influence on the school of Fontainebleau. Bronzino is usually associated with luxurious portraiture

¹ The 'Saint Catherine Reading' at Hampton Court Palace is another charming picture by Correggio in a similar style.

(in the Wallace Collection there is a characteristic portrait of the Grand Duchess of Tuscany), but in the National Gallery this talent is eclipsed by his great decorative work, 'Venus, Cupid, Folly and Time', in which, with little stretch of imagination, Venus might be forgotten and Diane de Poitiers put in her place. This picture, with its fluent pattern of naked figures poured over a ground of ultramarine, is a masterpiece of charm and Renaissance frivolity. But it has, also, a solemn significance when we reflect that it set the seal upon the great period of Florentine painting. Bronzino, for all his riches of accomplishment, harboured the germs of decadence ; the old sculpturesque simplicity of the Florentines was absent from his work, and, with him, art was no longer a religion. For Bronzino and his like, the artist was no more a craftsman in the City's service but a Court retainer paid to satisfy a sovereign's desire for luxury and materialism.

CHAPTER II

THE VENETIAN SCHOOL

TO pass from Florentine art into Venetian is to take a journey through the looking-glass, for in Venice we meet a style and code of values exactly the reverse of the methods and thought which reigned supreme in Florence.

The art of the Venetians is the antithesis to the art of the Florentines. Inasmuch as the clue to the genius of Florence was its intellectual restraint, so is the keynote of that of Venice its material magnificence. The discovery of poetry in science, indeed, was not the prime preoccupation of the Venetians, and the men of the sea-girt city, though inclined towards learning, were not archeologists, and had little grasp upon the past. For them, the sumptuousness of colour and the brilliance of the living moment

were the things which counted most. In the art of Venice, the pageantry of human life was presented in its fullest dignity and variety and, through the sheer splendour of their painting, the Venetians achieved for colour what the Florentines had done for form.

Venice was precisely fitted for the part her painters had to play. Being built upon the sea, the city was undisturbed by the civic discord and militaristic tyranny which were the bane of the rest of Italy at the end of the fifteenth century. As her neighbouring cities declined, so did Venice prosper and, being on the direct route to Constantinople, she became a metropolis of Eastern intercourse and luxurious trade. Her lagoons were afloat with multi-coloured vessels bringing merchandise from every nation, and her quays were thronged with rich traders from the Levant. The aristocrats of Venice exceeded the Medici in their lavishness, and they spent vast sums on the maintenance of a civic splendour, which transcended that of the imperial days of the past. The Church, moreover, aided the nobility in their efforts to make their city the most beautiful in the world, and the processions of the Doge and Senators were accepted by the Venetian ecclesiastics as events worthy of the dignity of a festival High Mass.

Thus it came about that the Venetian painters remained undisturbed by the classical preoccupations of form and composition, and found the stimulus for their art in the actual zest of living. Their pictures, though often portraying religious subjects, were never intended for the seclusion of some cool cloister, but for a great church or a palace wall, and their aim was not to stimulate the devotion or the intellectual appreciation of a few people who had the eyes to see and the mind to understand, but to provide sheer unbridled enjoyment for rich and poor alike. The painters of Venice, in short, did not speak, as the Florentines, in the language of metaphysics, but in

a common tongue, no less poetic, which all could understand.

The Venetian school was not exclusively national in origin, but was the result of a concurrence of artistic rivulets which, starting from such neighbouring sources as Verona, Padua and Ferrara, met together at Venice and there were transformed into one of the greatest streams of art which has ever flowed.

The School of Venice may be said to have started about 1410, when Antonio Pisano, called Pisanello (c. 1395–1455), medallist and painter, came from Verona to decorate the ducal palace. Unhappily, nearly all this artist's mural paintings have now perished, and we have only two frescoes, six or seven paintings and numerous drawings by which we may judge him. Pisanello's dominant characteristics were a sense of detail and a delicacy of touch which bring him near to Van Eyck, and his well-known love of birds and beasts is admirably reflected in the celebrated 'Vision of Saint Eustace' in the National Gallery. In view of Pisanello's—the medallist's—supreme achievement in economical design, it is surprising that in this picture—even though it may be an early work—the painter shows not the slightest feeling for composition. The design is almost non-existent; the artist has placed the saint on the one side and the stag on the other, and has taken a naïve delight in filling up the remaining space with as many flora and fauna as the limited proportions of the panel will allow. But the beauty of the draughtsmanship is unexcelled and in the marvellous forest setting realism is intermixed with fantasy. The Saint sharply pulls up his horse as he sees the vision, and one of his hounds—the only one to see the Crucifix—bares his teeth in fear of the unknown.

The 'St. Anthony and St. George' in the National Gallery is a later work, but it again attracts us by its minia-
turistic delicacy of touch and its perception of unusual

detail. Its subject represents an earnest conversation between St. George and St. Anthony the Abbot, but we do not trouble to wonder of what they are speaking, nor do we pay much attention to the significance of the Vision of the Virgin which appears in the sky—to which the saints also appear impervious. The impression, indeed, which we bear away, is of the artist's quixotic fancies and his colour contrasts ; the silver armour of St. George ; his astonishing straw hat ; his timid dragon and St. Anthony's contrastingly furious boar ; and, above all, the beauty of the azure sky and golden glory of the Vision, miraculously set above a darkening belt of trees, the fringe of a mysterious wood.

Pisanello's genius made its mark in Venice, but as yet the city had not sufficient artistic tradition to stand upon her own as a nucleus of painting, and it was left to her neighbour Padua, the seat of a famous university and the centre of a school of art, to produce a great painter who, through his association with Venice, was to lay another stone in the foundation of the mighty palace of Venetian art. Andrea Mantegna (1431-1506), of Padua, brought an element of austerity into the formation of Venetian painting and, through his rigid classicism and intense intellectualism, was more akin to Florence than to the regions of the North. As the pupil of the obscure and mysterious Squarcione, a dealer in antiquities as well as a master in the arts, Mantegna was brought up in the shadow of the classics. Squarcione's shop of antique odds and ends was the meeting-place of professors and scholars, and from his early days Mantegna could there absorb an enthusiasm for Imperial Rome. In later life, antiquity became his passion, and it is said that he possessed a collection of marbles, the sale of which broke his heart. Mantegna's devotion to the antique amounted almost to the pedantic, and entailed a lack of colour in his work. There is not a painting from his brush which is not

either classical in subject or rigidly sculpturesque in treatment.

Mantegna's most monumental work in London is the famous series of cartoons, in the Orangery at Hampton Court: 'The Triumph of Caesar', painted for a palace in Mantua, where they occasionally hung as a drop-scene in the ducal theatre. They were acquired for the English Royal collection by Charles I, and were lent to Mortlake in 1653 to be copied for tapestries. This slow-moving procession of litter-bearers, musicians, elephants and captives, who swarm around Caesar's triumphal car, has a lack of colour which intensifies its majesty, and we feel as we look at it as if the spirit of Lucan had taken pictorial shape.¹ In the National Gallery is a panel in grisaille, 'The Triumph of Scipio', which is not unlike the masterpiece at Hampton Court, although painted in mock-sculpture. In spite, however, of its adroit handling, the picture is too archaeological to be spontaneous, and we turn with refreshment to its neighbour, the 'Agony in the Garden' (Pl. XIII (b)), an intensely intellectual work, the outcome of profound thought. Here the artist has been deeply influenced by his father-in-law, Jacopo Bellini, the perfect exponent of naturalism, whose sketch-book, now in the British Museum Print Room, contains a similar version of Gethsemane.² Mantegna's picture is full of compositional science; the group of sleeping apostles, which forms a base to the pyramidal composition made by the rock and the kneeling Christ, could not be more elaborately

¹ The cartoons are divided into the following subjects: (i) The Picture Bearers; (ii) The Triumphal Car; (iii) The Litter Bearers; (iv) The Vase Bearer; (v) The Elephants; (vi) The Corselet Bearers; (vii) The Captives; (viii) The Musicians; (ix) Caesar's Chariot.

² Another closely related version of the same subject, in the National Gallery, is by Mantegna's brother-in-law, Giovanni Bellini, cf. page 72, Pl. XIII (a).



(a) THE AGONY IN THE GARDEN
Giovanni Bellini. National Gallery



(b) THE AGONY IN THE GARDEN
Andrea Mantegna. National Gallery



VIRGIN AND CHILD
Carlo Crivelli. Victoria & Albert Museum

fore-shortened—yet they lack any trace of virtuosity—and the little rabbits playing on the road attract our attention to the winding lines which lead into the distance, whence Judas and his band appear. The distant Jerusalem is Padua and we can identify many of its buildings, including Donatello's recently erected equestrian statue of Gattamelata, hoisted by Mantegna for the purposes of visibility on a high marble column towering over the city walls.

The third provincial city to contribute to the crystallization of Venetian art was the cultivated and courtly city of Ferrara, the centre of a learned group of artists of whom Cossa and Tura took the lead.

Francesco del Cossa (1435?–77) was a grim and mannered artist whose work is not always pleasing to the eye, although satisfying to the intellect. Our 'St. Vincent Ferrer' in the National Gallery reveals the artist in a mood of gaunt austerity and makes us wish for the possession of such a masterpiece as the 'Autumn', in Berlin, which has a chaste design and a noble aloofness, reminding us of Piero della Francesca.

Cossa took his inspiration from Cosimo Tura (1420?–95), the founder of the Ferrarese school and the arch-lover of the grotesque. Tura's works abound in grotesque detail; he revels in the oddities of land and sea, and there is scarcely a picture from his brush which is not decked out with a filigree of curious fishes, shells, and symbolic beasts.

Although Tura was capable of portraying beauty, such as is testified by our well-known 'Enthroned Madonna' in the National Gallery, with its wonderful contrast of reds and blues, his work always falls short of perfection by its steely hardness and the artist's exaggerated sense of the sculpturesque—employed not, as by Mantegna, in the interests of antiquarianism, but to ventilate his own ingenuity and dexterity. All his pictures are loaded with

strange gargoyle-like embellishments, and our 'Allegorical Figure' in the National Gallery is surrounded by such a welter of crustaceous detail that the throne on which she sits seems likely at any moment to suffer a sea-change.

A less mannered and more pleasing representation of the Ferrarese school in the National Gallery is the deservedly popular 'Israelites Gathering Manna', by Ercole de' Roberti (1450 ?-96), a picture which in its beautiful blend of deep blue and warm gold, and its element of unaffected gesture, departs from the *recherche* methods of the true Ferrarese and reverts to the naturalism of Jacopo Bellini.

The fitting together of these vivid shapes which were to compose the kaleidoscope of Venetian painting would not be complete without a mention of the most glittering facet of them all, Carlo Crivelli (1430/35-c. 1495), of whose works the finest extant collection hangs in the National Gallery.

Crivelli is a paradox among artists and, like Janus, he looks before him and behind. In some respects he was prophetic of the final achievements of the Venetian school, but in others he belonged to an age long past. The first glance, indeed, at the great Demidoff Altarpiece in the National Gallery, with all the barbaric splendour of its heavy gilding, brings us back to the age of the primitives. The altarpiece is a curious mixture of elements archaic and modern. The artist has embellished the picture with real jewels and embossed gold, which recall the luxury of Byzantium. The Virgin's crown contains real gems applied to the surface of the paint, and her robes and those of the Saints are raised in thick gesso. St. Peter's mitre is elaborately enamelled, and even his keys are attached to a piece of real string. But this archaic style of applied realism stands side by side with a knowledge of form and line which only a progressive artist could possess.

The glory of Crivelli's achievement is his 'Annunciation' in the National Gallery in which the Virgin hears the tidings in a Venetian palace at a golden-tiled street corner. The picture is ornamented with such a wealth of elaborate accessories that only a long study can bring them to the notice, but even in passing a few delicious details meet our eye. The Angel and S. Emidius¹ kneel in the street, unobserved by the passers-by except by a young man who shades his eyes as if he had caught a glimpse of the heavenly light. The Virgin's window is discreetly barred, like that of any sheltered maiden of Venice, and the dove has flown into her room through a hole in the wall planned especially to admit the ray of God.

This picture is one to which one can return again and again, with always a new discovery of an unobserved point, but for economy of detail and simplicity of design Crivelli's most notable representation in London is the 'Virgin and Child' in the Victoria and Albert Museum (Jones Bequest) (Pl. XIV), memorable for its glowing golden tones and its smooth unbroken curves. The Virgin and the Child are made to seem one figure by Crivelli's compact design, of which no component part is interrupted and every line revolves around the apple which the Child fondly presses against His Mother's breast.

Little is known of Crivelli's life ; he was a recluse by disposition and lived mostly at Ascoli in the Marshes, an isolated town near Venice which may be taken as the symbol of the artist's life. Crivelli stood as a solitary figure on the fringe of Venetian art ; he founded no school and had no successors. His work did not pass unnoticed, but his detail was too fastidious and his types too peevish to appeal to contemporary painters, whose minds were set on more extensive splendours. They wondered, therefore, at his precision and admired his entrancing detail, but as

¹ The patron saint of Ascoli, the artist's native city.

a master they could not adopt him. The vanguard of Venetian art passed on without a halt at Ascoli and left Crivelli, a puzzled and embittered figure, alone in the seclusion of his marshes.

Even Crivelli, so near a neighbour of Venice, could not make the elements of early Venetian painting indigenous, and the deciding factor which set the seal upon the formation of the art had to come from Sicily. Antonello da Messina (c. 1430-79) introduced a new technique into Italy, and replaced the flat medium of tempera by the more luminous medium of oil.

It was at one time supposed that Antonello learnt the art of oil painting in Flanders. Vasari states that, inspired by a Netherlandish picture which he had seen in Italy, he took a journey to the Low Countries especially to learn the secret of the Northern technique. But it is more probable that Antonello never left his Southern lands, but learnt the method either in Naples, from Flemish artists working at the Neapolitan Court, or in Milan, from Petrus Christus, who is thought to have been Antonello's colleague in the ducal palace. The National Gallery is rich in the art of this distinguished painter, who, combining the technical mastery of the Flemings with the imaginative conceptions of the Italians, could challenge the masters of both North and South in their own domains.

The 'Salvator Mundi', Antonello's earliest signed work,¹ is completely Flemish in character. The fact that the Christ has the face of a Fleming can be seen by comparing this picture with Antonello's supposed 'Self-Portrait' which is the epitome of the Italian type. Antonello's portrait of himself is solid without being heavy, and its miniature-like refinement is seen in every detail, even down to the stubble of the artist's shaven beard.

The 'St. Jerome in his Study' is so completely Flemish

¹ Dated 1465. It is painted entirely in oils.

in character that at one time it was ascribed to Jan Van Eyck. We can hardly wonder at this attribution ; the fastidious detail would not have shamed the Flemish master, who would have delighted in setting St. Jerome in this partially arcaded study, lit by a clerestory of lancet windows, outside which swallows are flying.

In Antonello's later (perhaps his last) picture, the famous 'Crucifixion', we find the perfect marriage of Flemish and Italian elements. The details, such as the three Maries and the two men with a ladder who approach the Golgotha, are again portrayed with an incomparable finish, but the conception has a spiritual intensity which the Northern painters lacked, and the design has a rhythmic nobility which only the great Italians could convey. The Christ, raised high in the heavens, dominates the picture and bisects a beautiful cup-like formation made by the tragic figures of the Virgin and St. John.

These tiny creations of the Sicilian master caused a stir in Venice, and there is no reason for wonder. Such little luminous oil paintings made even the works of Crivelli seem flat in colour. Crivelli, indeed, above all artists, could have learnt a lesson from Antonello, who proved that a brilliant effect could be gained on a small space without the paraphernalia of huge panels, raised gesso, applied jewellery and heavy embossed gilding.

Antonello da Messina may be taken as the last precursor of the Venetian school. Its first great exponents were the brothers Bellini.

The Bellini form part of a great artistic family. Their father, the famous Jacopo, gave them their first lessons in his studio, and their sister, Niccolosia, brought a new element of art into the family by her marriage with Andrea Mantegna. The brothers Bellini became the glory of all Venice ; Gentile was given the *Senseria*—an equivalent of the Freedom of the City—and at his death the honour was

handed on to Giovanni, much to the anger of the young Titian, who was then on the path of fame.

Gentile Bellini (1426/9-1507), has left us few surviving works, of which four are in the National Gallery. His 'Portrait of Sultan Mahommed II' is perhaps his masterpiece in portraiture, although a complete opinion of it is difficult to form, since the work has been much damaged and little of Gentile's original painting survives. But a Sultan is not an usual subject in European painting and curiosity alone would draw our attention to the picture.¹ Its fame, however, does not rely on mere novelty, but on its incisive accuracy of characterization. The Sultan's face suggests a refinement of cruelty which is not far short of reality, if the story be true that, in order to give Bellini a vivid idea of what the execution of John the Baptist was really like, Mahommed had a slave beheaded before the artist's eyes.

The cruelty of the Sultan finds a contrast in the clemency of the Doge, whose portrait by Gentile's younger brother Giovanni (1428/30 ?-1516) hangs on a neighbouring wall. Leonardo Loredano, the 74th Doge of Venice (1501-21), was famed for his patriotism and statesmanship; during the wars with France he sent his private plate to the Mint to be absorbed into the public currency. His kindly wisdom is finely indicated in Giovanni's famous portrait, which combines a richness of colour with a penetration into character.

Giovanni Bellini's finest work in the National Gallery is the 'Agony in the Garden' (Pl. XIII (a)), which may be interestingly compared with Mantegna's version of the same subject. Both are the strict contemporaries of each other, being done from the drawing by Jacopo in the British Museum Sketch Book. Giovanni's picture shows

¹ It was painted during the artist's visit to Constantinople in 1479.

less scientific knowledge than that of Mantegna, and its design is more loosely constructed. The sleeping apostles are less learnedly grouped, and their postures and expressions are unconvincing ; nor is there that winding line leading our eye to the walled city which was one of the more intellectual beauties of Mantegna's work. In Bellini's picture a carping critic might declare that the forms have little relation to each other, and that the angelic vision in the sky marks one of the artist's most infelicitous moments. But even with the admission of these faults, how much is there that is beautiful to compensate for these defects of technique ! The approach of dawn over the hills is portrayed with the most exquisite sensibility and the whole scene is bathed in a soft radiance, which is only apparent in those mysterious moments between night and morning, when the last shades of twilight are fleeing before the sun.

Another sensitive piece of landscape painting is seen in the 'Madonna of the Meadow' in the National Gallery, formerly attributed to Giovanni Bellini and now given to Marco Basaiti (op. 1490-1521).¹ Here the Virgin is seated, amongst labourers and oxen, in a meadow which lies outside a little hill-town, whose white towers glisten through the hazy sunlight of a winter's morning.

The painter in whom the spirit of the Venetian Renaissance found its first true ripening was Giorgione (1477-1510), whose enormous repute has, perhaps, been enhanced by the extreme rarity of his pictures. There are, indeed, only three works which are held beyond suspicion as being by the master,² and our little 'Man in Armour' in the National Gallery has been mercilessly doubted. It seems,

¹ An even more recent ascription is to the studio of Giovanni Bellini.

² 'Fête Champêtre', in the Louvre ; 'The Tempest', formerly in the Giovanelli Collection, Venice ; the altarpiece at Castelfranco.

however, likely that the picture is an original work, being a study for the figure of San Liberale in the altarpiece at Castelfranco. The picture has a swiftness of execution which indicates a preliminary study and the figure has, as Sir Charles Holmes suggested, a drooping listlessness, unsuited to a warrior saint, but understandable in a model overcome by fatigue after hours of standing.

At Hampton Court Palace there is a well-known 'Shepherd with a Pipe' attributed to Giorgione. Although it has the warm, glowing colours such as we find in the Louvre 'Fête Champêtre', its conception is based on a loose sentimentalism, which is unassociated with Giorgione and brings the picture nearer to Palma.¹

Next to nothing is known about Giorgione's life; we are told that he was very musical and of a gentle nature, and we know that he died at the age of thirty-three in the epidemic of plague which swept away half Venice. His short-lived existence reminds us of a Greek poet's illustration to the life of man; he flew like a swallow on a stormy night into a brilliantly lighted room where, after circling quickly round and delighting the company with his presence, was attracted again to the window-pane and was once more whirled into the outer darkness.

Giorgione's death in 1510, although an irreparable loss, left no empty space in the ranks of painters. His place was immediately filled by Titian (1480?–1576), who, throughout the span of his long life, remained the dominating figure of Venetian art. Even the greatest of his contemporaries did not scorn to learn from him and Titian became a Gamaliel at whose feet all Venice sat. In the

¹ Palma Vecchio (1480–1528) is represented in the National Gallery by several fine works, of which two, 'St. Jerome in his Study' and the 'Warrior Adoring', lack that false sentimentality and exaggerated allegory, which often ruined Palma's work, and made him, in many respects, the G. F. Watts of Italian painting.

National Gallery, Titian holds sway almost as he did in Venice and the great Venetian room contains nine masterpieces in which almost every facet of his art is represented.

Our earliest picture is the *Portrait of a Man*, or 'Ariosto', in which the artist does not aim at psychological disclosure but subordinates every element of the picture to the painting of the sleeve.¹ In this early portrait our foretaste of Titian's power is conveyed only in his portrayal of a rich material, but in the 'Noli Me Tangere' we begin to see him as a master. Here the technique is unambitious, but the tone has that lyrical restraint which we associate with Giorgione. The landscape, indeed, contains buildings identical with those which he painted for Giorgione's 'Sleeping Venus' (Dresden), and the date can be fixed to Titian's Giorgionesque period, 1509-14. But it is not of dates that we think when looking at this picture, but of its rare artistic qualities: the perfect poise of the tones and masses and the rhythmic balance of the lines. The angle of the tree is purposely set so that the eye easily passes from it down to the figure of the Magdalene, who in an ecstasy of reverence crawls on her knees towards the Master, whilst the slightly bent position of Christ, as He leans towards her, continues the outline of the hill. The landscape, too, has a grandeur fitting to the solemnity of the occasion. The scene of this miraculous meeting is laid in a deserted hill-side garden, over which the deep blue shadows of the last hours of a summer night are being relieved by the golden tinges of the dawn.

Even such a wonderful work as 'Noli Me Tangere' hangs at a disadvantage beside 'Bacchus and Ariadne'

¹ Titian's wonderful suggestion of the substantiality of quilted satin found an echo in English painting, two centuries later, in the sunset-tinted quilted skirt of Sir Joshua Reynolds' 'Nelly O'Brien' (Wallace Collection).

(Pl. XV(b)), the triumph of Titian in the realms of paganism and, perhaps, the most complete of all his paintings. The picture may, indeed, be considered the zenith of pictorial expression ; in it all the functions of great painting are fulfilled, and such essential aesthetic elements as unity of composition, harmony of colour, vitality of line and infinity of interest meet in due proportion.

Of all pictures, few have had greater influence upon artists than the 'Bacchus and Ariadne' ; Poussin's knowledge of it is constantly reflected in his work, and its early acquisition by the founders of the National Gallery gave an opportunity to British artists to fall beneath its spell. The picture has been so frequently praised that almost every passage is famous ; the outstretched hand of Ariadne, the circlet of stars above her head, Bacchus's wreath of ivy leaves, and the little jasmine-flowers growing in the foreground have been endlessly described and analysed. Few visitors to the National Gallery, indeed, are unfamiliar with the picture's individual beauties, and most have only to shut their eyes in order to see before them this twilight glade at Naxos in which Bacchus, returning from a sacrifice with his immortal companions, springs from his leopard-drawn chariot to pursue Ariadne in the silence of a lapis-lazuli night.

'Bacchus and Ariadne' was one of the earliest purchases for the National Gallery, and the most recent was another great work by Titian : the 'Family Group',¹ which once belonged to Van Dyck, and represents the male members of a distinguished Venetian family (perhaps the family of Cornaro or Vendramin), worshipping before an altar. The picture is infused with Titian's characteristic generosity of

¹ The 'Bacchus' was purchased in 1826, in a lot with two other pictures, for £9,000. The 'Family Group' was obtained in 1929, for £122,000, from the collection of the Duke of Northumberland at Alnwick.



(a) THE ORIGIN OF THE MILKY WAY
Tintoretto. National Gallery



(b) BACCHUS AND ARIADNE
Titian. National Gallery



ADORATION OF THE SHEPHERDS
Jacopo Bassano, Hampton Court Palace

colour and opulence of tone but, in it, his magnificence has been rudely brought to earth. The midsummer night's dream at Naxos has vanished and, as we contemplate the Cornaro Group, we have our feet very firmly planted in the wealthy world of men.

The National Gallery is not the only public place in London in which one can study Titian, and in the Wallace Collection hangs the celebrated 'Perseus and Andromeda', a magnificent excursion into sensuous mythology, which was found by Sir Claude Phillips in Hertford House, hung very high and in bad condition in a top-floor bathroom. Like much of Titian's finest work, this picture was painted in Venice for Charles V of Spain and its subject has an interesting historical significance. The legend of Perseus and Andromeda was very popular in the High Renaissance, and a living tableau of her liberation from the monster was acted in a pageant, given in Rome in 1473 by Cardinal Pietro Riario for Leonora of Aragon, who was then on her way to marry the Duke of Ferrara.

Titian's peer in painting and his rival in brilliance was Tintoretto (1518-94), whose 'Origin of the Milky Way' (Pl. XV (a)) in the National Gallery almost equals 'Bacchus and Ariadne' in its infinite interest and rich perfection. Tintoretto's picture is a masterpiece of dynamic rhythm, and the downward swoop of the god Jupiter as he places the infant Hercules at Juno's breast is conceived in the true Michelangelesque manner. This tremendous portrayal of the event, which dusted the heavens with stars, fulfils the artist's aesthetic ideal, since it combines Michelangelo's gigantic design with Titian's richest colouring.

The 'St. George and the Dragon', though less powerful than the 'Milky Way', is hardly less imaginative, and the heavily gowned princess, fleeing from the combat between saint and monster on a lonely shore, is one of Tintoretto's most felicitous conceptions. Even the sky is troubled by

the conflict and its flashing vision casts a fleeting shadow on the castle walls.

For a long time London lacked a representation of Tintoretto's portraiture, but in 1924, on the event of the National Gallery's centenary, the nation was presented with the 'Portrait of Vicenzo Morosini', which, in its sinister refinement, reminds us that Tintoretto was once El Greco's master.

Another Venetian with whom El Greco is said to have worked is Jacopo Bassano (1510?-92) whose 'Christ Driving the Money Changers from the Temple' in the National Gallery bears a striking resemblance to the Spanish painter's early work.

But Bassano was a simpler artist than his frenzied Cretan pupil and was one of the first painters in Venice to find delight in the portrayal of country scenes, and to study landscape for its own sake rather than as a pleasant *obbligato* to the main design. The scene of most of his pictures is the small market town from which he takes his name, and his figures are usually men and women of Bassano pursuing the course of their daily labours, minding their cattle or, as in the National Gallery picture, selling their wares.

Bassano's finest representation in London is at Hampton Court in the well-known 'Adoration of the Shepherds' (Pl. XVI), which has the broad designing and the tonal transparency of a piece of stained glass. Here, the shepherds who crowd around the bent tree are really men of the fields, and one among them holds his hat above his head in a gesture of spontaneous reverence.

Bassano's pictures and those of his two sons found great favour in Venice, for they contrasted with the ceremonious luxury of Venetian city life like a breath of country air. They revealed, moreover, the subtle skill in lighting and jewel-like brilliance of colour, without which no picture could be admired in Venice, where no artistic expression,

whether in painting, tapestry or glass, could stimulate appreciation unless it displayed a sensuous, radiant beauty.

The rich colouring and massive designing of the Hampton Court Adoration brings us near to the art of Paolo Veronese (1528-88), the last great Venetian painter of the sixteenth century, who was Bassano's complete antithesis in that his vision never travelled beyond the walls of a Venetian palace, and his people were never humbler in grade than the servants of princes, dressed in the richest of brocades or velvets, or perhaps, at the very nadir of Veronese's social scale, a princess's negro slave.

Of the several famous works by Veronese in the National Gallery, popular opinion has always selected the geometrically planned 'Vision of St. Helena'¹ as its favourite, but the richly coloured 'Family of Darius before Alexander' is more characteristic of the master's work, with its palatial setting and joyous, worldly pageantry. The subject represents the family of the defeated Persian King doing homage to the Macedonian, but Veronese has forgotten the picture's classical significance and has draped the Greeks and Persians of antiquity in the most opulent of Venetian patterned stuffs.

But finery of dress and sumptuousness of setting are not always essential to grandeur, and the austere panel of 'Unfaithfulness' surpasses all Veronese's work in London by its supreme craftsmanship and wisely distributed design. The marvellous modelling of the woman's back and the noble pattern made by her outstretched arms against the traversing lines of the tree transform the picture from a pretentious allegorical morality into a rhapsody of form.

Veronese was the supreme painter of the hey-day of the

¹ It is only by chance that this picture did not find its way to the Wallace Collection, since it once belonged to the third Marquess of Hertford and hung in St. Dunstan's, his villa in Regent's Park.

Venetian Renaissance, and his huge pictures of feasts and functions are fitting expressions of a time when princely living was at its height. Veronese worked in Venice at the height of the city's magnificence, and after him came silence. Throughout a sterile century Venetian painting lay dormant. The Renaissance tree had borne such a wealth of golden fruit that there was no room for more, and the boughs were breaking beneath its weight. But in the early eighteenth century, new flowers appeared and a fresh, though less resplendent efflorescence was put forth in the rococo blossomings of Canaletto, Tiepolo and Guardi.

CHAPTER III

THE SCHOOLS OF SPAIN, FRANCE, GERMANY AND THE NETHERLANDS

(a) SPAIN

IN our assessment of Spanish Renaissance painting the difficulty which arose with sculpture occurs again, for the Spanish Renaissance was but a fleeting moment, and art in Spain passed almost imperceptibly from the medieval into the Baroque.

In Spain there was no rolling crescendo of painting as there was in Italy. The general level of accomplishment was low and eclectic and was mostly imitative of Flemish or Italian methods. But once in each successive epoch a solitary genius arose to startle the world by his brilliance : in the Renaissance age it was El Greco ; in the Baroque era of the seventeenth century it was Velazquez ; and after 1750 came Goya.

The reasons for the broken progression of Spanish art are numerous and spring from the fact that in Spain, painting was seldom a spontaneous and inevitable expression of national thought, but an artificial industry made to

order. The etiquette of the Spanish Court was so rigid that it crushed all individuality, and where the Court relaxed the Inquisition laid its hands.¹ Noblemen were not allowed to send their children to be educated abroad and every foreign book was censored. The young artist in Spain was forbidden to study the nude and, consequently, the development of figure painting was sacrificed to a solicitude for public morals. Artists, moreover, enjoyed the lowest possible status at Court and even Velazquez, who was on intimate terms with the King in private intercourse, was placed in public functions among the royal barbers.

But intense repression always leads to violent expression and in the Renaissance age the pent-up national feeling burst forth in one anguished utterance. The voice, however, was not Spanish, but that of a Cretan emigrant, Domenico Theotocopoulos, known to the world as El Greco (1545-1614).

El Greco was Greek by nationality, being born at Candia in Crete, but he came at an early age to Venice, where he fell under the influence of Tintoretto and Bassano. In 1575, when he was about thirty years of age, he left Italy for Spain, where he resided, in Toledo, until his death in 1614.

We are fortunate in possessing, in the National Gallery, examples of Greco's earlier and later styles. The 'Christ Driving the Money Changers from the Temple' may interestingly be compared with Bassano's version of the same subject in Room VII ; both pictures have a sense of move-

¹ The awe with which the Spanish royalty was regarded is instanced by the fact that to touch the Queen's garment, even to save her life, was an offence of death. The fiasco of the Armada, moreover, was due to the command being given to a man who had never been to sea before, but possessed the less essential virtues of being the ducal bearer of the highest title in the land (Medina Sidonia) and the only person who could represent the King.

ment which befits the excitement of the subject, but Greco has the superiority of effect and design. In Bassano's picture, the crowd is stirred by Christ's exhortation to a vague agitated bustle ; in Greco's His scourge can almost be heard to whip the air and fear overtakes the crowd with the swiftness of a tongue of flame.

The 'Christ in the Temple' has the warm tones of Tintoretto and Bassano, but in the famous 'Agony in the Garden' (Pl. XVII (b)) El Greco leaves Italy far behind him and becomes possessed of that religious fervour which touched a chord of sympathy in Spain, the land of mystics. This tremendous picture is the quintessence of mental torment, and, in it, natural appearances are subordinated to the suggestion of intellectual agony. Christ is a gaunt figure of suffering, and His face is taut with intense mental pain. All Gethsemane vibrates with the supernatural force of tragedy, and the Angel of the Passion rides on a swirling cloud, which envelops the sleeping Apostles and breaks upon the scene like a rolling wave. Greco's clairvoyance into an agonized mind is unique, and his art requires a special study and understanding. Those who demand nothing more in a painting than a representation of a known object, framed and placed upon a wall, will hurry past his pictures and meet their match in some simple Dutch interior. But art has a range far wider than that of the camera and is on a different plane. Minute realism is not the goal of art. The Chinese painter, made known to us by Laurence Binyon, was right in saying that an artist in portraying a pear-tree should not merely represent fruit on a tree, but recapture the soul of the pear as it dances on the bough. El Greco was, indeed, a painter in the Chinese sense ; a profound, nervous genius who fulfilled every function of the artist. His art may sometimes jangle on the nerves like a piece of modern music, but it always provokes a thrill in those who can respond.

Although he lived in the Renaissance age, El Greco was a timeless genius ; he complies with neither medieval nor renaissance canons and of all artists of the past he is, perhaps, the nearest to the moderns of our day. Like other tormented visionaries he belongs to no particular age. In a ghostly procession of artists he would have no place with the others and would be found, perhaps not very far from William Blake, compelled to march alone.

El Greco's disregard of natural appearances, and his pre-occupation with the intense crises of the spirit make him an unique personality in Spanish art. Except for occasional magnificent achievements in portraiture, his work has never found an echo in Spain. After him, the clarion note of Spanish painting was that of realism ; and, paradoxically enough, it is to this realism that modern art, which is so closely linked with El Greco, owes at least one-half of its parentage. El Greco was unknown to the great French innovators of the nineteenth century, although 'The Burial of Count Orgaz' in the Church of St. Thomas at Toledo was even then considered as precious as a crown jewel and guarded by a grille. Such harbingers of the present age as Manet, Courbet and Daumier, through sheer ignorance of his existence, passed El Greco by, and found their tower of strength in the later, more realistic, achievements of Velazquez, Ribera, and Goya.

(b) FRANCE

The fifteenth century in France was a period of intense political crisis, and the arts, which throughout the Middle Ages had conformed to an unbroken pattern, were thrown into disorder. The occupation of Paris by Henry V, after the victory of Agincourt, drove all artists from the capital, and the scattered outbursts of painting which ensued came entirely from provincial centres. The principal centres of art lay towards the South, and Burgundy and Provence

contributed the largest share of artistic production. Avignon, ever since the days of the Popes (1309-70), had been the town of passage between France and Italy; it was the intellectual market where the latest opinions and discoveries of art and science were bartered and exchanged. Moreover, at the neighbouring city of Aix, King René held his court, to which were attracted artists and men of learning from far and wide.

The rival of Provence as a nucleus of artists was the luxuriant valley of the Loire, whence Foucquet and the Master of Moulins—the two greatest painters of the century—took their origin. Jean Foucquet of Tours (c. 1420-80) spread the fame of France beyond the Alps and was invited to the Vatican by Eugene IV, to paint the papal portrait. Foucquet's work is unrepresented in London except by a miniature from an illuminated book in the British Museum.¹ But those who keep the memory of the recent Exhibition of French Art at the Royal Academy still fresh in their minds may recall the portrait of his royal patron, Charles VII,²—a poverty-stricken figure made almost as bizarre by the brush of Foucquet as he was to become four hundred years later under the pen of Bernard Shaw—and the marvellous picture of his mistress, Agnès Sorel,³ in the noble guise of the Virgin, enthroned in a *mandorla* of blue and scarlet angels, and dressed in a royal, ermine-lined robe, her milk-white breast laid bare.

With Foucquet, who had travelled beyond the Alps, we catch a first glimpse of the new Italian taste, which was percolating into France and was bringing the true Renaissance spirit every day a little nearer. With the mysterious Master of Moulins (op. c. 1480-1520) this trend of taste is even more clearly crystallized, and French art begins to

¹ See Part III, ch. II, p. 110.

² Lent by the Louvre, No. 74.

³ Lent by the Royal Gallery, Antwerp, No. 70.

assume the aristocratic splendour of the mature Italian style.

The Master of Moulins' identity has never been established, but his portraits of the Duke and Duchess of Bourbon, in the celebrated altarpiece at Moulins from which he takes his name,¹ fix his connexion with the Bourbon princes, and support the widely held opinion that he is identical with Jean Perréal, the much extolled Court painter to Charles VIII, about whom poets sang.

The Master of Moulins' early style is represented in London by the 'Meeting of Joachim and Anna' in the National Gallery, which possesses a sparkling quality of pigment suggestive of Flemish influence.² The scene depicts the rapturous meeting of the future parents of the Virgin, but the gate before which they greet each other is not the golden gate of the Temple but the entrance to a walled city, perhaps the Master's native Moulins. The figure of Charlemagne standing to the right suggests that the picture was a commission from Charles VIII, but the lop-sided design which this detached figure entails gives rise to the opinion that it forms only the left-hand panel of a triptych of which the central portion is lost, and the right-hand panel has been identified by Dr. Friedlander with the 'Annunciation' in the Ryerson Collection, Chicago.³ For all its brilliance of colour, the 'Meeting of Joachim and Anna' is cold rather than exhilarating, and lacks the breath of life; its delicate miniature-like workmanship loses its effect by being presented on too large a scale.

With the Moulins Master we pass through the flaming

¹ French Exhibition, 1932, No. 64.

² The 'St. Victor and a Donor at Glasgow' (French Exhibition, 1932, No. 68) points very definitely to a Flemish training and suggests strongly the influence of Hugo van der Goes.

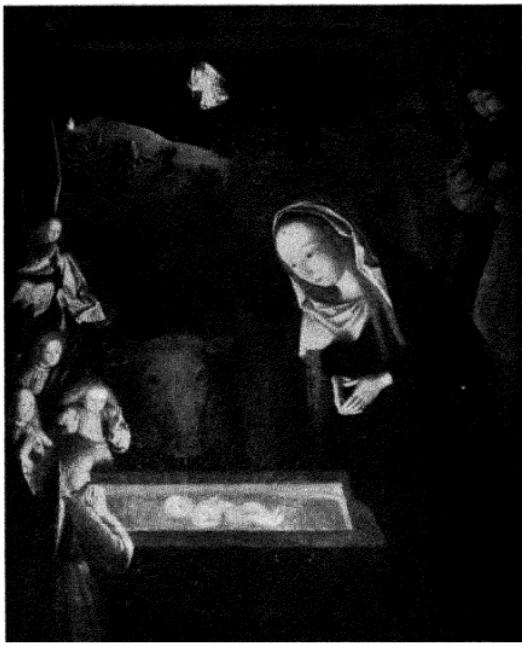
³ French Exhibition, 1932, No. 63.

gateway of the French Primitives into the sixteenth century ; and at once we find that the fashion has changed to a predilection for a grandiose Italian style or a modish form of portrait painting. François I, though the greatest of all stimulators of Italian taste, was not the earliest French King to invite Italian artists across the frontier. Under Louis XII, Benedetto Ghirlandaio came to the Auvergne to paint a fresco of the 'Adoration', and other Italian painters were summoned to Albi to contrast the grim exterior of its fortified cathedral (which rises like a giant over the little rose-red city seemingly to epitomize the tyranny of the medieval Church), with a series of gay, cajoling interior mural paintings.

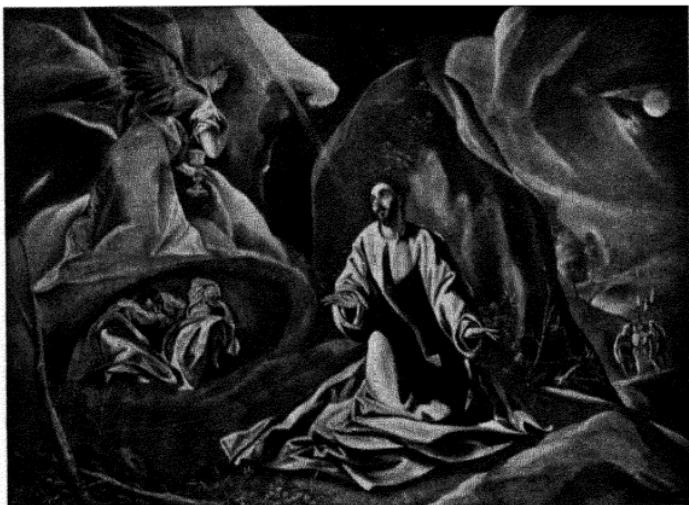
But François I set the seal upon the new standards and at his palaces of the Louvre, Chambord and Fontainebleau he employed Italian artists. His triumphant return to France after the victory of Marignano made him the hero of his age. A leader of men and a lover of women, France had every opportunity of grandeur open to him and, in the early stages of his reign, he never felt the purse-strings tighten.

In the National Gallery there is no example of the hybrid Franco-Italian art which we call the school of Fontainebleau, and it is to the French royal palaces that one must go to see this exotic, fleshly style. But with the second characteristic of French Renaissance painting, that of portraiture, it is otherwise, and several celebrated examples are to be found in London.

Under François I, portrait painting became the fashion. The modish distraction was to summon the artist to the *salon* and to sit to him for a crayon drawing. The Court ladies, like all those who have only frivolity to pursue, had no spare time on their hands and could only afford the artist a sitting for a slight sketch ; the finished paintings were done from the crayon drawings in the artist's studio.



(a) THE NATIVITY
Geertgen tot sint Jans. National Gallery



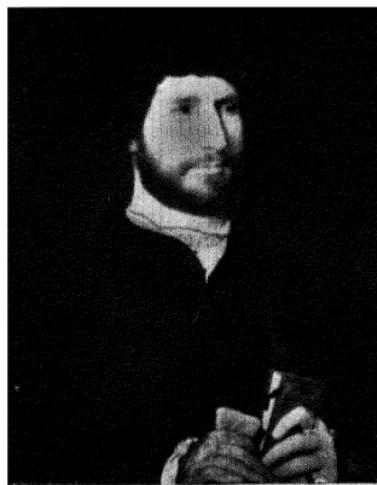
(b) THE AGONY IN THE GARDEN
El Greco. National Gallery



(a) THE DUCHESS OF MILAN
Holbein. National Gallery



(b) SIR HENRY LEE
Sir Antonis Mor. National Portrait Gallery



(c) L'HOMME AU PÉTRARQUE
Jean Clouet. Hampton Court Palace

Replicas were made both of the paintings and of the sketches, and the crayon studies were either given away to friends or were kept in albums with the same religious care with which our grandmothers preserved the family photographs.

Until recent years, all French portraits of the sixteenth century were classified under the generic name of 'Clouet' and it is only recently that they have been divided mainly into the work of Jean and François Clouet, father and son, who carried on the tradition of Court portrait painting from the early years of the reign of François I to the hey-day of the reign of Charles IX, and of Corneille de Lyon (c. 1520-74), a Netherlandish settler in Lyons.

Jean Clouet (op. c. 1516-40) is an artist of whom we know little, except that he came to France at an early age from Brussels. Our familiarity with his work is confined in England to the celebrated and powerful portrait of Claude d'Urfé ('*L'Homme au Pétrarque*') (Pl. XVIII (c)) at Hampton Court Palace.¹ Of François (op. c. 1522-72), there is more to study, although two of the finest works in England, associated with his name, hang in private collections: the famous portrait, said to be from his school, of Mary Queen of Scots (*Le Deuil Blanc*) at Windsor, and the supposed 'Diane de Poitiers in her Bath' in the Cook Collection at Richmond.²

In the Wallace Collection there is a small version after François Clouet³ of *Le Deuil Blanc* [Mary Queen of Scots in the white mourning worn for her first husband Francis II], but the best example of French Renaissance portraiture in the collection is the little portrait, by Corneille de Lyon, of Edward Seymour, Duke of Somerset, ancestor

¹ French Exhibition, 1932, No. 88.

² French Exhibition, 1932, No. 53.

³ Both the Windsor and the Wallace versions are based on a famous drawing in the Cabinet des Estampes, Paris.

of the Marquesses of Hertford and the brother of Jane Seymour, the third wife of Henry VIII.

There is no reason to wonder that Edward Seymour should have been painted by a French artist, for, like all distinguished Englishmen of his period, he was closely associated with France. His daughters, indeed, took their instruction from a French tutor, Denisot, under whose guidance they published a collection of panegyric poems upon Margaret of Navarre, entitled *Le Tombeau*.

It is indeed a pleasing reflection that this early ancestor of the Hertford line, through his link with France and his taste for continental culture, anticipated by some three hundred years the founder of the unique Collection in which his portrait now hangs.

Although the painting of the French Renaissance achieved distinction in its own way, its extent was limited and its power of resistance slight. The art encouraged by François I was exclusively adjusted to his own personal tastes and a break was sure to come. At the end of the sixteenth century, French society was divided against itself by the catastrophic civil wars, and each side was flying at the other's throat. The princely house of Valois fell to ruin, and the new dynasty of Bourbon took its place. Under Henri IV order was restored to the realm, but only after a storm, which had brought sore suffering upon native genius. The clouds dispersed at last but, at their passing, the seventeenth century had begun ; the painters of Renaissance France had vanished and French patrons and artists were obliged again to look abroad in their quest for craftsmanship and inspiration. Marie de' Medici heralded the new era by sending to Flanders for Rubens to decorate her palace of the Luxembourg, and Claude and Poussin journeyed to Rome to introduce into French painting the golden age of the French classic style.

(c) GERMANY

Painting in Germany was a widespread art throughout the Middle Ages and it had its centres in such different regions as Cologne, Colmar, Dresden, Augsburg, Nuremberg and the Danube Valley. But its reputation was as local as its sphere of action was disseminated, and at the end of the fifteenth century few of the German painters were known to the outside world. Certain of them, however, merited a wider recognition, and such a master as Conrad Witz of Basle can almost be considered the equal of the elder van Eyck in his breadth of conception, blended with a minuteness of technique.¹ The early German painters, indeed, did not fall far short of that of the Flemings in their brilliance of colour and freshness of touch, and Stefan Lochner (c. 1400-51), the principal artist of the school of Cologne (represented in the National Gallery by the 'Three Saints'), made such a skilful use of varnish as almost to deserve a share in the Flemings' claim to the invention of the oil medium.

The earliest means by which Germany spread the reputation of her art was through the excellence of her engravers, whose achievement shared with the art of printing the credit of giving ready access to the pleasures of the mind and eye. Martin Schöngauer (1445-91) made himself famous by his graceful line engravings, of which many reached Italy and some even excited the admiration of the youthful Michelangelo.

Martin Schöngauer opened the floodgates of German pictorial art; after him the stream took on a double course and painting ran parallel with engraving. In Albrecht Dürer of Nuremberg (1471-1528), painter,

¹ London possesses no specimen of the South German school. Even in the National Gallery, the representation of German painting as a whole is meagre.

engraver, and consummate draughtsman, Germany suddenly became possessed of an artist, who commanded a range of thought and a degree of accomplishment, comparable with the mental equipment of the great Italians. His influence, indeed, spread to Italy; in Venice Dürer became the intimate friend of Bellini and received letters of praise from Raphael. His versatility brought him into line with the great masters of Italy, and, in the extreme beauty of his appearance, his fervent intellect, and his deep researches into botany and science, Dürer is comparable with Leonardo da Vinci.

It is not as a painter that Dürer, with the exception of his excellence in portraiture, displays the true trend of his genius.¹ It is, indeed, through his woodcuts and engravings, his little pearly landscapes and his countless studies of flowers, plants and animals, with here and there a bunch of violets, a bird's wing or a cluster of reeds by a pond, that he has won the love of the world. But in his portraits Dürer combined the larger scale of conception with minute linear expression, and the result was a series of magnificent pictures of which, in London, we are fortunate in possessing two splendid examples. The 'Portrait of a Young Man' at Hampton Court Palace, could hardly be excelled as a *tour de force* in incisive portraiture; it has that cultured serenity which is found in the work of earlier Venetian painters with whom Dürer, through his stay in Venice, was already familiar. The better-known 'Portrait of the Painter's Father' in the National Gallery is a striking example of refined characterization and delicate draughtsmanship. Despite its well-authenticated history (it was presented to Charles I in 1636 by the city of Nüremberg), the picture was received by the critics, on its acquisition

¹ The 'Four Apostles' at Munich is Dürer's finest oil painting on a large scale.

by the National Gallery in 1904, with an outcry of hostility.¹ But it is difficult to see where its detractors found their faults, for the picture has a delicacy of expression and a sensibility of touch which are unmistakably Dürer's. The quiet, autumnal tones of brown, yellow and grey, which certain critics found distasteful, seem an admirable scheme in which to portray the spare, defiant old goldsmith who retains something of his former vitality even at the season of his life when autumn is, perhaps too visibly, turning into winter.

North of the Alps Dürer's only peer was Hans Holbein the Younger (1497-1543), a native of South Germany who, before he came to enrich the tradition of art in England, had already made a reputation in Augsburg and Basle for large mural paintings and portraiture, as well as for metal work, engravings, stained glass and his woodcut series of the 'Dance of Death'.

Holbein's first visit to this country occurred in 1526 and lasted two years. It was not a fruitless period, although the artist was not yet brought into the immediate Court circle. A letter of recommendation from Erasmus won him the patronage of many distinguished folk, and he returned to Basle in possession of the true friendship of Archbishop Warham and Sir Thomas More.² After another three years in Switzerland, Holbein returned to London and became the Court painter to Henry VIII.

¹ Cf. *Burlington Magazine*, IV. 431-4, 570-2.

² His paintings during his first visit include a portrait of Archbishop Warham, now in the Louvre; a replica is now at Lambeth. A third replica, perhaps by Holbein himself, is in the National Portrait Gallery. Another fine portrait by Holbein in London is the 'John Reskemeer' at Hampton Court, where also hangs 'Noli Me Tangere', an unusual subject for Holbein. At Hampton Court, too, ascribed to Holbein, are portraits of Erasmus and Johann Froben.

He died in London of the plague, at the age of forty-six.¹

The pivot of Holbein's experience in England was his painting of the King, whom he depicted with all the swaggering gesture of a Renascent prince. Confusion always arises where Holbein's portraits of Henry are concerned and it is often difficult to distinguish the replicas from the original.² The original portrait is now in the possession of Lord Spencer at Althorp, and magnificent copies exist at Windsor, Trinity College, Cambridge, and in the National Portrait Gallery. At Chatsworth there is a superb drawing of Henry VIII, a cartoon for part of the great fresco in Whitehall which was destroyed by fire during the reign of William III.

In the Barbers' Hall, Monkwell Street, is a large painting representing the bestowal of the Charters in 1541 by Henry VIII on the Corporation of Barbers, an act by which the Barbers were united with the surgeons in one company until 1745.

Holbein's infallible genius for achieving likeness in portraiture was of the greatest use to Henry, who sent him to Brussels to bring back the portrait of a prospective bride, Princess Christine of Denmark, the girl-widow of the Duke of Milan (National Gallery) (Pl. XVIII (a)). It

¹ In the Wallace Collection is a famous miniature 'Self Portrait' dated the year of Holbein's death. It was evidently painted on the back of a playing card as the fragments of two hearts are visible. An almost identical miniature is in the collection of the Duke of Buccleuch. Another fine miniature portrait by Holbein in London is the 'Anne of Cleves', Henry VIII's fourth wife, in the Victoria and Albert Museum. It was painted probably in July 1539 at Düren for the King himself. The miniature is set in an ivory case, carved in the shape of the Tudor Rose.

² Replicas of Holbein's work are many. He kept a studio in London, where either he or his pupils made versions of his pictures.

is interesting to surmise the changes which would have occurred in history if this marriage had been arranged, but the good sense both of her uncle the Emperor and of the lady herself intervened. Charles V had no wish for his niece to take the place of Jane Seymour, and Princess Christine is said to have replied to the royal emissaries from England that had she two heads she would willingly leave one at the disposal of the King, but having only one she was obliged regretfully to decline.

Holbein's portrait is a marvel of economy and taste ; the colours are of the most sombre and the deep slate blue is only relieved by occasional bright patches, such as the Princess' gloves which balance happily with the cartellino on the wall, and her ruby ring, which finds an echo in the red of her lips.¹ This wondrously simple picture, in which most of the character of the subject is concentrated in the refined beauty of the hands, triumphs, through its very simplicity over the more elaborate 'Ambassadors', which, compared with Christine's portrait, seems merely oppressive. 'The Ambassadors' is as profuse in detail as the 'Duchess of Milan' is frugal, and a knowledge of all its *minutiae* would entail a long study. The picture represents Jean de Dinteville, the French Ambassador to London, with his friend Georges de Selves, later the Bishop of Lavour. The figures are posed in front of a high table on which are piled instruments of mathematics, astronomy and music : arts and sciences in which both learned men were versed. The floor on which they stand is a replica of the tessellated pavement before the High Altar at Westminster

¹ The 'Duchess of Milan' originally belonged to the Duke of Norfolk and came into the market in 1909. £60,000 were necessary for its purchase by the nation and only one-third of the money could be raised by the National Art Collections Fund. At the eleventh hour, when the picture was on the eve of departure for America, a telegram was received promising the remaining £40,000. The donor, a lady, has remained anonymous.

and between them rises a strange object which, if viewed from the extreme right-hand side of the picture, is seen to be an anamorphosis of a human skull.¹

After Holbein, silence fell on German painting until Adam Elsheimer (1578-1610) was born to break it.² But the new sound, although in itself no thrilling melody, was to reverberate through Europe in a measure disproportionate to the meagre inspiration of its maker. Elsheimer brought the romance of Italy into Northern Europe. Rubens purchased his pictures and admired his starlit landscapes; from him the earlier Dutch masters learnt a style which they passed on to the young Rembrandt; and in the year of Elsheimer's death, Claude arrived in Rome, to continue the German artist's romantic rambles in the Roman Campagna.

(d) THE NETHERLANDS

The first thought which strikes all those who, on leaving the Italians enter a room of contemporary Flemish pictures, is that the Flemings, in the matter of technique, achieved in a night what the painters of Italy had struggled for centuries to attain. Whilst Jan van Eyck was achieving those marvels of accuracy in paint, whose unconscious, easy realism almost outwits reality, Paolo Uccello was initiating the Florentine public into the delights of a rocking-horse world, and Pollaiuolo was astonishing lay and expert minds alike by his laboured excursions into anatomical science. With the work of the Flemings, accuracy of vision seems to be a gift of God and no struggle

¹ Such capricious distortions were the fashion of the time and were not only used by great artists to display their sleight of hand but became a modish parlour-game. An amusing example of 'anamorphosis' is the elongated portrait of Prince Edward in the National Portrait Gallery.

² Elsheimer is represented in the National Gallery by several small pictures, including 'Tobias and the Angel' and a 'Shipwreck of St. Paul'.

against the problems of form and perspective is perceptible. But those who begin easily do not always endure the longest and, whereas the art of Italy can be said to have extended from the fourteenth to the eighteenth centuries, painting in Flanders met its end half-way through the seventeenth. Facility of touch was always the Flemings' pride, and even until the end they contributed to the world's great painting. But except with their supreme masters, such as Jan van Eyck ; Brueghel, the arch-cynic ; and Rubens, the Titian of the North, imagination was not their reigning characteristic and Flemish art, for all the magic of its craftsmanship, dwindled into the humdrum.

A further impression gained by a spectator of early Flemish pictures is that, although they mostly portray religious subjects, the scale in which they are conceived is infinitely smaller than that of the Italians. In Florence and Venice, painters were commissioned to decorate the huge wall-spaces of churches, palaces or municipal buildings, and their patrons were often collectors on a princely scale, who demanded that even easel pictures should retain something of the spaciousness and grandeur of a fresco. In the North, the demand for art was great and wealth was not absent, but the conditions were completely different. The Netherlands had no palaces in which a Michelangelo could have worked, and their churches, being cold and sunless, afforded no occasion for a mural painter to extend his art. Pictures, therefore, were small and their colours brilliant, as if to compensate for the gloom which reigned out of doors throughout the wintry season. Moreover, the collectors of the North were not, with few exceptions, princes with vision and experience, but wealthy burghers who desired cheerful decorations for the walls of their town houses. Even the scene of their religious pictures could not stray too far from home, and the Flemish Virgin often receives the Angel's greeting in the cosiness

of her own fireside. Method as well as taste was adjusted to the conditions of the North, and tempera, useless in a damp climate, was replaced by the oil medium.

The romance of oil painting is said to have begun with the birth of Hubert van Eyck about the year 1366, but the medium was known in Northern Europe before that date. Oil painting is mentioned in a treatise on the arts by the monk Theophilus who lived in the late twelfth or early thirteenth century, and there is evidence that some variety of varnish-medium was practised at an even earlier date. But to the brothers van Eyck may all credit be due ; for they perfected the medium of oils and brought it into common use.¹ Of Hubert van Eyck (c. 1366–1426) there is no representation in a London public collection ; his work, indeed, is extremely rare, and it was one of the calamities of art history that the 'Hours of Turin' were burnt in a fire at Turin in 1903.² At Richmond, however, in the private collection of Sir Herbert Cook, hangs the celebrated 'Maries at the Sepulcre' (Flemish Exhibition, Royal Academy, 1927, No. 7) which reveals qualities of landscape and figure painting akin to those of the monumental masterpiece at Ghent, the 'Adoration of the Lamb'.³ Hubert's younger brother, Jan (c. 1385?–1441) is represented in the National Gallery by three great pictures, all of which are famous and one of which is an abiding masterpiece. The 'Portrait of a Man, Timothy',

¹ Tempera (colours diluted with yolk of egg) was the common medium in the Netherlands as in Italy before the advent of the van Eycks. According to Vasari, Hubert was driven to experiment in oils after seeing a panel split as the result of the moisture of the atmosphere.

² The mystery in which Hubert van Eyck is shrouded reached its climax when M. Emile Renders recently attempted to prove his existence a myth.

³ A water-colour copy of the 'Adoration of the Lamb', made for the Arundel Society, hangs in the National Gallery.

dated 1432, the year of the completion of the 'Adoration of the Lamb', is a fine example of Jan van Eyck's—at times relentless—veracity to nature, and is evidently the likeness of a scholarly friend (the Greek inscription of the name suggests that Timothy was a humanist) to whom the picture was given (again to judge from the inscription) as a 'loyal token' (*leal souvenir*). The smaller portrait of 'A Man in a Red Turban' painted a year later, is an even finer example of the painter's shrewd perception of human character; its jewel-like perception of detail and the marvellous delineation of every furrow of the skin and twist of drapery, are concentrated on a tiny panel, and suggest that Jan could have created a monumental portrait on a postage stamp. For sheer perfection of technique, however, aided by no rigid training or any background of tradition, but achieved merely through firmness of hand and complete accuracy of vision, the nonpareil is the portrait of 'Jan Arnolfini and his Wife' (Pl. XIX (a)). Almost every visitor to the National Gallery claims this picture as his special favourite, and there must be few who have not again and again delighted in its delicious details: the convex mirror with the figures of the artist and a friend reflected in the open doorway; the medallions of the Passion inset around the mirror-frame; the cherry-tree which grows outside the window; the rosary on the wall portrayed with every refinement of shadow and reflection; the dusting brush on the chair-back with every bristle separately marked; the lady's pattens so minutely painted that the marks of where her feet have been are visible; and the modest inscription (*Johannes de Eyck fuit hic, 1434*), so gaily embellished that even the full stop seems likely at any moment to dance away on the caprice of its curl and flourish. How subtle a thing is attraction, for what is there in the subject of this picture other than a very homely couple renewing their marriage vow

in a spick-and-span bedroom, such as any member of the wealthy Flemish *bourgeoisie* would possess? Yet it fulfils every function of great painting. Just as the convex mirror reflects the little room revealing things and people which we should not otherwise see, so does the picture, through the genius of its artist, reflect a section of the gallery of Life. Even the stiff Italian merchant loses a little of his antipathetic appearance in the light of the artist's achievement, and the expectant condition of his timid little wife contributes so much to the charm and humanity of the picture that we are almost inclined to agree with the renascent view that pregnancy is an attribute to beauty.

Jan van Eyck's younger contemporary, Petrus Christus (1410?–73?), had an even greater influence on European painting since, through the collaboration with Antonello da Messina at the Court of Milan, he introduced the oil medium into Italy. But such an example of his work as the 'Portrait of a Man' in the National Gallery, for all its close observation of detail, has a sparseness of imagination which only shows how indiscriminate is Providence in her distribution of the favours of reputation.

Jan van Eyck and Petrus Christus worked principally at Bruges, but at the neighbouring city of Tournai another influential master was at work, the Master of Flémalle or—as he is now identified—Robert Campin (c. 1380–1444).¹ Campin, although a recent discovery to us, was a famous personage in his day; he was actually older than Jan van Eyck and held an important office in the Painters' Guild at Tournai. But a glance at our celebrated 'Madonna and Child' in the National Gallery will tell us at once that Campin and Jan van Eyck were the opposites of each other. The fastidious Court of Philip of Burgundy would never have employed Campin, and

¹ The identification was first made by M. Hulin de Loo in 1909. See *Burlington Magazine*, XV, 203–8.

van Eyck's princely patron would have recoiled at the uncouth provincialism of Campin's rather frowsy Virgin. But the delicacy of detail and sense of pleasant domesticity are still effective in Campin's work. In the National Gallery's picture, a delicious view of Tournai and its surrounding country is seen through the window of the little room in which the Virgin—an awkward village maiden—suckles her Child on a settle drawn up to the fireside, with a plaited fire-screen behind her making a halo for her head.

The National Gallery possesses a wealth of small pictures of the early Flemish school. Charming, delicate works attributed to Campin's pupil, Rogier van der Weyden, the celebrated Entombment by Dirk Bouts, as well as fine paintings by the two great artists of the later generation, Memlinc, and Hugo van der Goes, can there be studied. In the same room hangs the much-beloved 'Legend of St. Giles', by the Master of St. Giles, in which the saint is rescuing his hind from the royal hunt and receives in his hand the arrow intended for the driven animal. Even the King and his huntsmen kneel in shame of their needless cruelty.¹

¹ Whilst this book was in the press, the companion panel to the National Gallery's picture, 'The Mass of St. Giles', was presented to the nation through the National Art Collections Fund. It now hangs at Trafalgar Square. The picture shows the Saint elevating the Host in the Royal Abbey Church of Saint-Denis, near Paris. The topographical interest of the panel is great, since it is the only existing representation of the Royal Abbey of France before its destruction. The altar is the 'Maistre Autel' which Suger, the abbot of Saint-Denis under Louis VI and Louis VII, declared to be so ravishing as to make him imagine that he was not on earth but in heaven. A record of the actual jewels which adorned the altar has been preserved; it fills 27 pages in the manuscript inventory. The figure kneeling at the 'prie-dieu' is Charles Martel; he wears the 'Sainte Couronne', destroyed by the Huguenots in 1567, one of the three great crowns of the French Royal House.

By the end of the fifteenth century, the art of Flanders had achieved a widespread reputation through the van Eycks and their immediate followers, and all European countries were following suit with the oil medium. But with the dawn of the new era, which really marked the Flemish Renaissance, a change came over Netherlandish painting. The princely patrons, who had favoured van Eyck, gave place to a circle of wealthy business men, whose aim it was to exploit the popularity of Flemish painting and to make it a financial proposition. The scene, too, was changed, and the quiet cities of Bruges and Tournai yielded their position as art centres in favour of Antwerp, a bustling metropolis of commerce. Painting, then, was shorn of its individuality, and artists lost their local simplicity and became disastrously cosmopolitanized.¹ Just such a one to suffer from the change was Mabuse (1472–1535 ?), whose huge panel of the 'Adoration of the Kings' in the National Gallery epitomizes the extravagance which replaced the costly but tasteful restraint of the old régime. Mabuse's picture, for all its dexterity of technical achievement, is little more than an accumulation of opulent detail. Pelion has been piled upon Ossa to suit the demands of wealthy merchants, for whom no design could be too elaborate nor any ornamentation too rich. Despite the nine angels who flutter in descending scale above the Virgin, the event of the Nativity is swamped beneath the welter of extravagant detail, and the dominating interest lies not in the religious significance of the subject, but in the silks, furs and precious stones which only money can buy. The Virgin, herself, is an ineffectual figure as she receives the kingly retinue,

¹ One of the few advantages brought by the new age was the freshly cultivated taste for landscape painting, chiefly exploited by Joachim Patinir (1485–1524). An exquisite 'River Landscape' from his school, conceived in palest blue, white and silver, hangs in the National Gallery.

and even her chalice is filled, almost to the brim, with glittering golden coins.

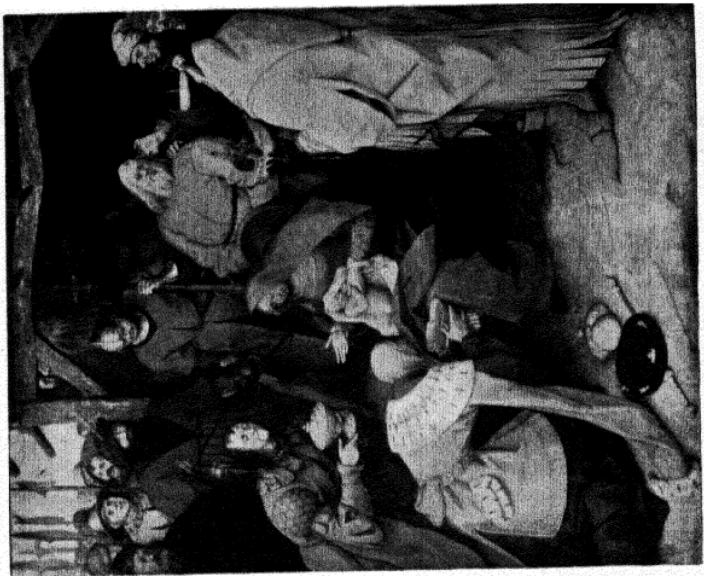
After the complacent prosperity of Mabuse, it is a relief to turn to a discontented spirit such as Pieter Bruegel (1525-69), in whom a complete antithesis to Mabuse is very surely found. Bruegel is a unique phenomenon in Flemish art and his life is a cause for wonder. For many years he was known only as a draughtsman and engraver, and it was not until the last few years of his life that he suddenly produced a series of brilliant and original paintings.

It is only in Vienna that Bruegel's genius for re-creating village life can be properly studied, and no one who has seen those marvellous paintings will forget the 'Children Playing in the Village Square', the 'Peasants' Wedding Breakfast', or the bitter cold of the famous Winter Landscape. But in the National Gallery there is a picture which, although it displays nothing of Bruegel's *flair* for landscape painting, reveals, perhaps more clearly than any other, the full extent of his satiric vein. The 'Adoration of the Kings' (Pl. XIX (b)), is a piece of caustic satire and we have only to look at the date, 1564, to find the reason for the artist's sarcasm. In this year, the Netherlands were enjoying a spell of unexpected peace; it seemed at last as if the iron hand of Spain had been removed from the Low Countries. But the hopes could not have been more false, and in the following year the Duke of Alva arrived in Flanders to plunge the country into abject misery and terror. The repression of speech and act under the tyranny of the Inquisition had made its mark on Bruegel, who in his picture of the Adoration satirizes the Bible story in a way which might have cost him his life at any other time. The kneeling King has lost every shred of majesty and is the quintessence of doddering dotage, whilst the second King, who stands behind him, has the face of a common villain.

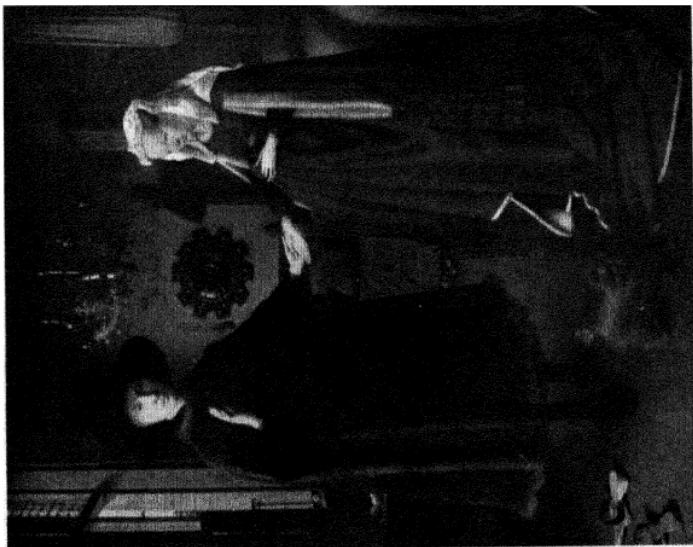
Balthazar, too, is nearer to a blackamoor than a tactful artist should have dared to make him. Even the Holy Family are not free of Bruegel's derision and Joseph is a figure of rotund ineptitude, whilst the Child could hardly be more simpering nor the Virgin look more silly. The ceremony of the kingly offerings is watched on the left by a crowd of gaping yokels, whilst, on the right, a bespectacled Jew finds his attention distracted from the Holy Child to the golden vessel, borne by Balthazar, at which he enviously gazes.

In his technique, as well as in his conceptions, Bruegel is unusual and his breadth of treatment and swift, spontaneous brush-strokes foreshadow coming events, when the miniaturistic traditions of the early Netherlanders were to be deserted in favour of the immense spectacular style of which Rubens was to be the incomparable master. Bruegel, indeed, may be considered the principal link between the early masters of the Renaissance age and the later masters of the Baroque, but there were at least two other painters in whom the style of Rubens was anticipated : Mor and Pieter Pourbus. Sir Antonis Mor (1512-76) came over to England to work for Mary Tudor, whose portrait by him is now one of the glories of the Prado Museum, Madrid.¹ He heralded Van Dyck in England, and in Spain, where he worked for Philip II, he preceded Velazquez by his eminence in Court portraiture. Mor is represented in the National Gallery by the 'Head of a Man', and in the National Portrait Gallery by the portrait of the Champion and Master of the Armouries to Queen Elizabeth, Sir Henry Lee (Pl. XVIII (b)), whose ferocity of character is suggested by the artist with an uncustomarily clear-cut brilliance. Pieter Pourbus (1510-84) inclined towards Italy as Antonis Mor to Spain, and in his cele-

¹ A fine contemporary copy is in the hall of Trinity College, Cambridge.



(b) THE ADORATION OF THE KINGS
Pieter Bruegel. National Gallery



(a) JAN ARNOLFINI AND HIS WIFE
Jan van Eyck. National Gallery



A SLOVENE PEASANT WOMAN
Albrecht Dürer. British Museum

brated 'Allegorical Love Feast' in the Wallace Collection, we have the spirit of the Italian Renaissance transported to the North. The partakers of this florid meal in the peace of a woodland glade are dressed in the most gorgeous garments of brocade and velvet, and the table at which they sit is of Italian marble. Yet there is something essentially Northern—indeed almost Shakespearean—in this most enjoyable picture, and it is not perhaps too great a tax on the credulity to imagine that one might, perchance, have come upon just such an hilarious picnic party when taking a walk through Arden.

The painters who have figured in our present discussion of Netherlandish art have all been natives of Flanders, and the question might well arise as to the development of Dutch painting as compared with Flemish. In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries Netherlandish art was undivided, and Dutch painters were indistinguishable from Flemish. Some painters, however, usually classed with the Flemish school by reason of their early date, were natives of Holland, and most notable of these are Bouts, van der Goes, Gerard David and Geertgen tot sint Jans. Gerard David (1460?–1523) worked as a boy at Haarlem, perhaps in company with Geertgen, but he spent most of his life at Bruges, where he produced a prolific series of delicate luminous pictures conceived entirely in the Flemish tradition.¹ Geertgen tot sint Jans (c. 1465–95), however, is a far rarer artist and the National Gallery was fortunate, some years ago, in obtaining his *Nativity* (Pl. XVII (a)), a most delicious and original picture, and one of the earliest known examples of a 'Night Scene'. Such an audacious experiment as the representation of Night in paint was unknown

¹ The 'Marriage of St. Catherine' in the National Gallery is an admirable example of the way David assimilated the spirit of Flanders and its style is almost indistinguishable from that of a picture by Memlinc.

in the Low Countries at that time and was very rare in Italy. Piero della Francesca had, it is true, foreshadowed Geertgen by some forty years in his 'Tent of Alexander' at Arezzo, but Geertgen has doubled the difficulties of the Italian artist by making each plane of his picture glow in a reflected radiance. The background group is lit by the miraculous light emanating from the Child, whilst the Shepherds in the distance are seen partly by the light of their hill-side fire, and partly in the radiance which gleams from the angel's glory.

Dutch and Flemish painting journeyed hand in hand until they reached the cross-roads of the seventeenth century. Then the parting was inevitable. The Flemings pursued the road which led to Italy, and Rubens came to invest his country's art with the splendour of an Italian sunset. But the Dutch hardly ventured beyond the boundaries of their own country and preferred to concentrate their art upon the smug comforts of their own homes.

PART III

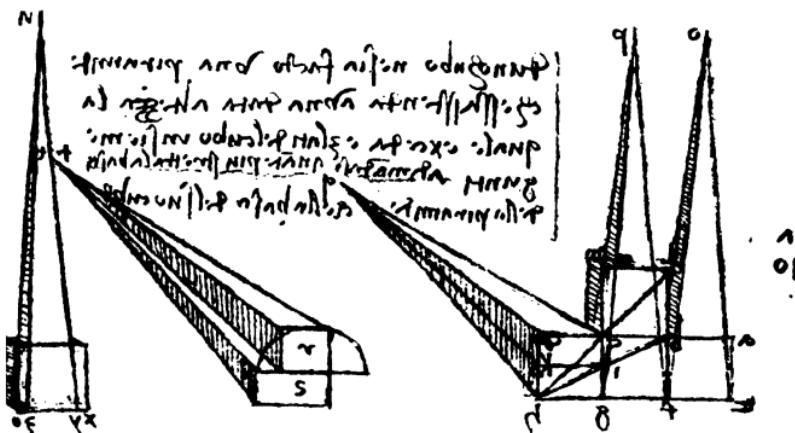
THE SMALLER ARTS

(British Museum ; Victoria and Albert Museum ; Wallace Collection ; Soane's Museum ; Tower of London)

CHAPTER I

DRAWINGS AND ENGRAVINGS

THE production of drawings and engravings was such a vast feature of the later Renaissance epoch, and is one which is so extensively represented in London that any indication to the Londoner of individual works out



DRAWINGS FROM A NOTE-BOOK BY LEONARDO DA VINCI
Victoria and Albert Museum

of the numberless specimens seems impossible. Recommendation can only be made of the Victoria and Albert Museum, with its collection of drawings, including the celebrated note-books of Leonardo da Vinci, and, above all,

of the Print Room at the British Museum, which contains one of the most comprehensive collections of prints and drawings in the world. The drawings and engravings are exhibited in rotation in the Exhibition Gallery, but the huge number makes the turn of each one on public view slow in coming, and the rest can be examined by qualified students in the Students' Room behind the mahogany screen.¹

Many people consider that a drawing must necessarily be a sketch in pencil and fail to realize that under the term of 'drawing' at least six distinct processes, including those of gouache and watercolour, may be implied. They do not recall, moreover, that drawing, as a distinct art, was hardly practised in Europe until the fourteenth century, when paper was introduced to Europe from the East.² A favourite method of drawing in Renaissance Italy was silverpoint, done with a gold or silver wire upon paper washed with zinc white. This process produces a silver-grey line which gives an effect both of delicacy and sharpness. Leonardo da Vinci and the young Raphael were famous exponents of the silverpoint method, which was a widely-used process during the Renaissance era. Unfortunately, the tradition was dropped and this tranquil medium is seldom used in the present day.

¹ For admittance to the Students' Room, a ticket of qualification or a card of membership to the National Collections Fund or Contemporary Art Society is necessary.

² Paper originated in China, perhaps in the second century B.C. In A.D. 751, during an unsuccessful campaign of the Chinese against the Arab Moslems in Samarkand, many Chinese prisoners were taken, among whom were several skilled paper-makers. From them the art was learnt. The manufacture entered Christendom from the Arabs, either through Greece or through the capture of Moorish paper mills during the reconquest of Spain by the Christians. But in the process of changing hands, progress was retarded and good paper was not made in Europe until the end of the thirteenth century, when Italy rediscovered the secret.

Use was made of drawing with the pen, but the Renaissance masters often employed chalk—usually red or black—with much skill.

A specialist in Renaissance drawings would find in the Print Room of the British Museum an inexhaustible store of material and would work steadily through its portfolios. But it is difficult to choose, out of such luxuriance, a few isolated examples for the benefit of the more casual visitor. From the myriad treasured possessions of the Print Room may perhaps be quoted the Sketch Book by Jacopo Bellini (1400-70); all the drawings of Dürer, especially his drawing of the Slovene Peasant Woman (Pl. XX)¹; Verrocchio's Head of an Italian Girl; Michelangelo's 'Holy Family', framed and set above the staircase in the Students' Room; and Raphael's chalk drawing of the Virgin and Child—related to the Madonna of the Tower in the National Gallery—which now hangs on the screen dividing the Students' Room from the public gallery, where all who pass by can see it.

The art of engraving is even more various than that of draughtsmanship and the true distinctions between its various methods often evade the eye of the most careful observer. The word 'engraving' is applied, in its larger sense, to the processes by which a design can be multiplied by printing, and these processes are classified either

¹ Until its recent acquisition by the British Museum at an enormous cost, Dürer's magnificent drawing was little known. It is inscribed in Italian '*una vilana windisch*' (a Slovene Peasant-woman) which indicates that it was made either on Dürer's journey to Venice through the Tyrol in the autumn of 1505, or shortly after his arrival in Venice, where he remained until 1507. (See *British Museum Quarterly*, V, No. 1.) This wild woman of the Northern Steppes, who was, probably, like the artist, a visitor in Venice, may well have appealed to Dürer, whose interest inclined towards unusual human types as well as to flowers, birds and animals.

according to the material on which the design is worked or according to the tools and method which the process requires. The engraver, moreover, may be an artist of two kinds. If his work is his own expression, he is a creative artist and we speak of his achievement as an 'original' engraving or etching. But if, as is by no means rare, he uses his engraver's tools merely for the reproduction of a painting or some other known work of art, he is an interpretative artist and we call the result a reproductive print.

The processes of engraving are mainly three, which may be classified according to the materials on which the engraving is made :

(1) Engraving on wood or 'Relief Print', in which the block line of the design (the part inked for printing) is raised in relief.

(2) Engraving on metal or 'Intaglio Print', in which the block line is cut into the surface.

(3) Engraving on stone or 'Surface Print', in which the ink is applied to the surface of the original block, on a level with the rest.

The last-named category is entirely out of our period. In the second are included line-engravings and etchings ; the latter process being still embryonic during the Renaissance period. It was the wood-block and line-engraving processes in which the Renaissance artists excelled. Albrecht Dürer was the greatest engraver of the period. A magnificent collection of his engravings (including 'Melancholia'; 'Knight, Death and the Devil'; 'St. Jerome in his Study' and others) is in the British Museum ; and a few woodcuts and line-engravings are on permanent exhibition in the Victoria and Albert Museum.

CHAPTER II

MANUSCRIPTS, BINDINGS AND PRINTED BOOKS

(a) MANUSCRIPTS

THE art of illuminating Manuscripts was like a ray which shot the Middle Ages through with splendour. There was scarcely a book which was not 'lit up' on almost every page by a painting in brilliant gold and colours. But as the Renaissance approached, the art of illumination declined and the invention of printing dealt to it the death blow. Like all things which have life, this art did not meet death without resistance, and even after the invention of printing, numerous illuminated books continued to be made. In the early printed books, the initial letter was often left to be filled in by the scribe. This refers above all to Italy, where the fine editions of the classics, printed in Venice and Rome, comprised a considerable element of brush and pen. The Venetian nobles, moreover, even as late as the sixteenth century, commissioned eminent painters to execute the frontispieces of the volumes containing the patents, by which the Doges appointed them to any high position. But, by mid-sixteenth century, the day of the illuminated manuscript was over; printing attracted the minds of the highest calibre and the few illuminators who remained had irremediably deteriorated in quality, with their exaggerated use of gold, their garish colours, and their over-sophisticated embellishment.

France was the country which retained longest the tradition of manuscript illumination and, in the middle of the fifteenth century, a fine pictorial style was developed, of which Jean Fouquet of Tours was the most illustrious exponent. To see the most splendid of his miniatures,

the 'Book of Hours of Etienne Chevalier, Treasurer of France', the student has to go to the Musée Condé at Chantilly, but the British Museum is fortunate in possessing one leaf from this famous book, the 'David in Prayer'.¹ Foucquet, with his intelligence and skill, was a fitting native of Tours, which throughout the Middle Ages was a city of considerable style and importance, the centre of a luxurious social life and the home of distinguished scholars and artists. Tours maintained its primacy of manuscript illumination into the sixteenth century with such painters as Jean Poyet and Jean Bourdichon; but the book decoration of this late period is so decadent in style, though unsurpassedly skilled in decoration, that it hardly belongs to the history of true book illumination. Bourdichon's unquenchable passion for heavy marginal decorations of flowers, birds and insects characterizes any work from his hand, and even the celebrated 'Hours of Anne of Brittany' in the Bibliothèque Nationale,² though a marvel of naturalistic accuracy, bears the stamp of bad taste.³

¹ Throughout Western Europe, from before the late fourteenth century until the Reformation, the *Horae* or 'Book of Hours', were the principal collection of prayers for private use. Usually each section of the liturgy was complemented by an illuminated page, and Foucquet's 'David' illustrates one of the seven Penitential Psalms. The recitation of the Hours of the Virgin (the main contents of all Books of Hours) was not obligatory on the clergy and was mainly a practice of the pious laity. The 'Hours of Etienne Chevalier' are incomplete owing to their depagination by some vandal in the late 18th century. Forty leaves are at Chantilly; two are in London, and one, the latest to be discovered, is in the possession of Viscount Bearstead (French Exhibition, 1932, No. 747 f.).

² French Exhibition, Royal Academy, 1932, No. 752e.

³ Some well-known French Manuscripts of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries in the British Museum are:

'Hours of the Virgin', etc., in Latin, of Paris use. Middle of

The Low Countries, which throughout the Middle Ages were closely in alliance with France, supported an equally flourishing school of manuscript illumination, which, in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, differed very little in style from the French. But the preference for a deep blue, very hard in tone, was peculiar to the Flemish illuminators. Early in the fifteenth century, however, a distinctive style was adopted and unconventional designs were used (cf. British Museum : Add. MS. 24189 ; Add. MS. 38122). Later, with the advent of the sixteenth century, the great Flemish painters, such as Memlinc and Matsys, brought their influence to bear upon book illumination, and soft colours or fine effects of atmosphere and landscape became characteristics of the art. In the Wallace Collection the 'Baptism of Christ', of the early sixteenth century, is a fine example of the new style, with its elegant forms and its delicious cool colouring. But its design is very curious ; its, perhaps, unique distribution of the masses into three separate tiers, one rising above the other, is inevitably reminiscent of the Persian style of miniature

fifteenth century. Belonged to Etienne Chevalier (Add. MS. 16997).

'Hours of the Virgin', etc., in Latin. Middle of fifteenth century. Ascribed by Durrieu to Foucquet (Add. MS. 28785).

'Hours of the Virgin', etc., in Latin. c. 1470. Containing eighteen miniatures in different hands, twelve being by Egregius Pictor Franciscus, thought by some to be François Foucquet, son of Jean (Egerton MS. 2045).

'Hours of the Virgin', etc., in Latin. Of the use of Tours. c. 1500. Containing miniatures associated with the name of Jean Bourdichon.

'Hours of the Virgin', etc., in Latin. End of sixteenth century. Containing sixteen miniatures in architectural settings with calendar illustrated by pictures of rural occupations, such as hunting, hawking, harvesting, etc. (Rothschild MS. X; Add. MS. 35319).

painting.¹ A well-known Flemish Manuscript of the sixteenth century, in the British Museum, is the 'Book of Prayers and Services for the Dead', in Latin, French and Flemish (Egerton MS. 2125), executed probably at Bruges for a nun of the Abbey of Messines, near Ypres. This book admirably illustrates the late Flemish style of book decoration, with its fine naturalistic painting set within a broad gold band, on which are dotted minutely realistic flowers, fruit, butterflies, insects and other isolated objects.

In the Victoria and Albert Museum (Salting Bequest) are two well-known leaves from the calendar of a Missal, representing the months of May, June, September and October. They are by Simon Benninck, a Flemish artist of the sixteenth century, whose self portrait in miniature is also in the Salting Collection.

In the first half of the sixteenth century Bruges was a centre of book illumination, and large numbers of books—some of no particular merit, being coarse in texture and uneven in treatment—were executed there. A few seem to have been commissioned for the English royal library, as some of the MSS. in the British Museum bear the arms of Edward IV and Henry VII. It is, indeed, remarkable that at so late a date, when the art of illumination was elsewhere moribund or in a state of hopeless decadence, in Flanders it retained not only its vitality but also, in many cases, its high standard.

Italian illumination in the Renaissance epoch went the way of all the other schools in its research after a more elaborate style, but artists in Italy had the advantage of having close at hand the resources of the classical Renais-

¹ Four distinct subjects are crowded on to this page, and God the Father, from His little window in the sky, is surveying the widely different events of the Baptism of Christ; the Raising of Lazarus; St. George and the Dragon; and the Transfiguration.

sance. Their ornamentation, indeed, did not favour flowers, birds and insects, but took the form of graceful candelabra ; classical vases and trophies ; medallions with portrait-busts and copies of antique gems, as well as *putti*, fauns and sphinxes and a wealth of miraculously painted pearls, rubies and other jewels. One of the most celebrated Italian Manuscripts in the British Museum is the Sforza 'Book of Hours' (Add. MS. 34294), a superb monument of elaborate illumination executed for Bona of Savoy about 1490. The names of Ambrogio da Predis and Antonio da Monza have been quoted for the artist of the miniatures in the Sforza 'Hours', but certain of them, recognizedly by Flemish artists, were later inserted in the book, in 1519-20, for the Emperor Charles V.

Perhaps more characteristic of the Renaissance age is the work of Giulio Clovio, a pupil of Michelangelo. London is fortunate in possessing two sumptuous books by Clovio, both executed for his patron, Cardinal Marino Grimani. One, a 'Book of Hours', is in the British Museum, and the other, perhaps the more celebrated of the two, is in Sir John Soane's Museum, Lincoln's Inn Fields. In the latter MS. (c. 1540), Clovio has illuminated his patron's 'Commentary on the Epistle of St. Paul to the Romans', and the book contains several fine representations of scenes in the life of St. Paul as well as two delicately finished landscapes. Clovio's works are rare, but in his day they were famous, especially his little portraits of lords and ladies in the lids of tiny boxes. Giulio Romano regarded Clovio with esteem, and Vasari writes about him in terms of the highest admiration, praising the artist for his miniaturistic skill in making figures no larger than a tiny ant yet with all the members as distinct as if they had been life-size.¹

¹ In the reference section of the National Gallery there is a fine miniature of 'A Jesse Tree' by Giulio Clovio.

Clovio was the last of the great Italian illuminators. After him the art once and for all declined. The spell was broken, and Italian book decoration ceased to be the mark of true genius and became a mere vehicle for the display of technical acrobatics.

(b) BINDINGS

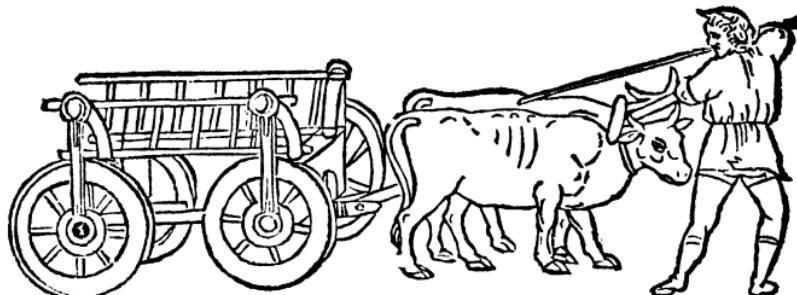
Inasmuch as the discovery of printing lessened the painter's opportunity for beautifying a book's interior, so did it transform book production into an art for the bookshelf and caused the interest to be concentrated on the binding as well as on the pages.

Book-binding is a very ancient art ; it came into being before the fall of the Roman Empire, when the unwieldy method of working on rolls was replaced by the setting-up of the pages secured to a back between two boards. The sumptuous decoration of bindings soon ensued, and we have evidence that in the fourth century A.D., jewelled and richly ornamented bindings were in use. Ivory, too, was used, and we know that in A.D. 828 the Bishop of Cambrai brought plaques of ivory from Constantinople for the embellishment of book covers.

Bindings of carved ivory, jewelled metal work, worked enamel and rich embroidery fell into disuse when, in the early fifteenth century, the art of gold tooling on leather penetrated Europe from the East and books came to be set side by side in a bookcase. Ornamented leather was used in isolated cases very early. The first known decorated leather binding is the cover of the manuscript 'Gospel of St. John', which was taken from the coffin of St. Cuthbert, when his body was brought to the new Cathedral of Durham in 1104, and is now in the library of Stonyhurst College. It dates from the seventh century.¹ After this,

¹ Photographs of St. Cuthbert's 'Gospel of St. John', and of some of the other early Durham bindings are obtainable at the

no more examples of ornamented leather bindings are traceable until the twelfth century, when it became the fashion to decorate leather coverings with small impressions in blind (i.e. without the use of gold). Such bindings are to be seen at Durham and Winchester, and at Montpellier and other places in France and Central Europe.¹ In the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, decorated leather bindings became very rare and scarcely any have survived. The material seemed to have lost its popularity, and bindings adorned with metal plates or upholstered in embroidery took the place of leather.



'CHARLES'S WAIN', FROM AN ALDINE EDITION OF *ARATUS, FRAGMENTUM*

In the fifteenth century, however, decorated leather bindings became common and the tentative attempts at blind stamping of the twelfth century were developed.² Large panel stamps were used and metal corners, bosses and clasps were affixed to the binding to heighten the effect of richness. Towards the end of the century, about 1470, gold-tooling came to Venice from the Near East, but, unlike

Victoria and Albert Museum. St. Cuthbert's Gospel was exhibited at the Victoria and Albert Museum in the English Medieval Art Exhibition, 1930.

¹ The style may have originated at Cluny or at any of the great monastic centres in France.

² The kinds of leather used differed according to countries. In Italy and Spain, morocco was most used ; in England, France and the Low Countries, calf ; and in Germany, pigskin.

the Eastern method, European gold-tooling was done by taking the impression of a design with a hot tool and gold leaf instead of with a cold tool and liquid paint. The supreme exponent of the art of gold-tooling was Aldus Manutius (the founder of the great Aldine Press). Aldine bindings are always unmistakable through their simplicity of designs, very notable after the heavy corded and cable patterns of the Saracenic bindings. His characteristic signs are either a little leaf (known as the Aldine leaf); an acorn; a Maltese cross; or the binder's own badge, a dolphin twined around an anchor.¹ The Aldine type, moreover, with its gracious italics, was unique in printing, being adapted from the handwriting of Petrarch.

In the sixteenth century, painting was applied to leather bindings on interlaced bands, and in North Italy, plaquettes, medallions or cameo-stamps were sometimes inserted on gold-tooled bindings. An excellent example in London of the cameo stamp on leather is the celebrated cover to the volume of Petrarch made for Pier Luigi Farnese (afterwards Pope Paul III) in the Victoria and Albert Museum. The cover is in red morocco, with a gold-tooled cameo stamp representing Apollo in his chariot and Pegasus on Mount Helicon.²

In France, the most significant worker in leather was Grolier (1479-1565) who came to Italy shortly before the death of Aldus (1515) and, in the last year of the reign of

¹ Some of the books sold by the Aldine Press were extraordinarily cheap: the *Hero and Leander* of Musaeus was sold for under a shilling and the *Idylls* of Theocritus for under half a crown in our present currency.

² This so-called 'Canevari' binding is wrongly named for it was used not later than 1550, whereas Canevari was not born until 1559. Any medal, coin or cameo may be used to make an impression on a leather-bound book. The usual method was to bind the book first in thick leather or pasteboard, then to damp the leather, and finally to press the die strongly upon it.

François I, returned to France. He was an illustrious exponent of the more ornamental Italian style, with its predilection for intricate geometrical patterns. Grolier's favourite material was an olive-coloured skin, but he also used brown calf and, more rarely, morocco. His most characteristic design is a decorative, interlaced strapwork.

In the Henri II period, French bindings became more highly ornamental and, at the same time, more elegant. The typical design of *rinceaux* (foliage) developed into the *fanfare*, an elaborate contraption of palm branches, spirals and other foliated forms. The most characteristic artists in binding of the later period of the French Renaissance are Nicolas and Clovis Eve,¹ and the well-known Le Gascon. The Eves loved to tool their bindings all over with small ovals, enclosing strips of flowers, acorns and pomegranates, whilst the work of Le Gascon is usually more elaborate, being in red morocco, inlaid with citron, and decorated with intersecting bands of gold-tooling, filled with scroll work in 'pointillé' (a pattern of dots or 'stipple'). The work of all three famous artists is celebrated for its grace, neatness and ingenuity.

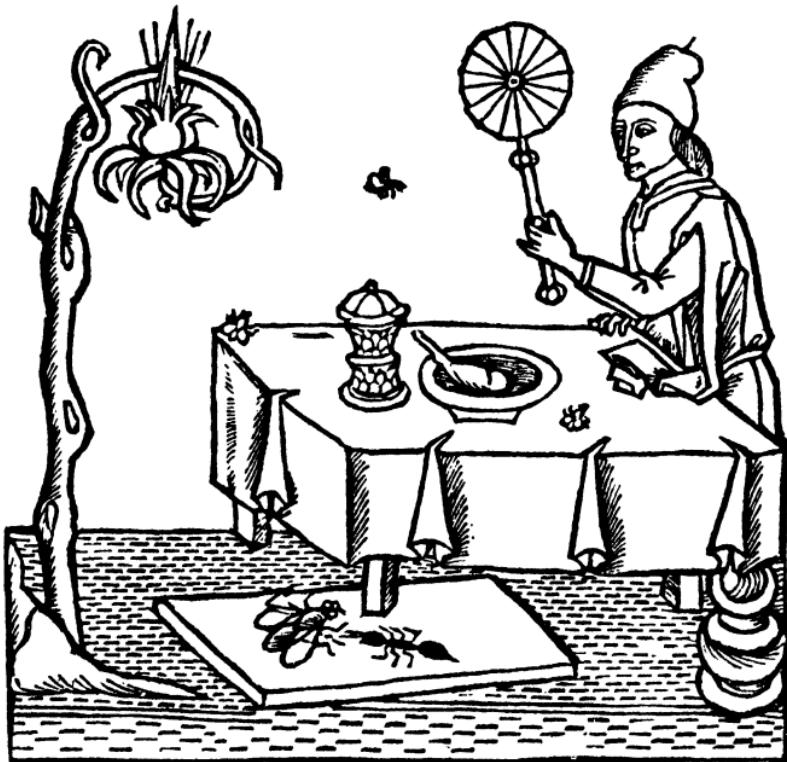
Germany was also noted for its excellence in book-binding, but there the decorations—usually in stamped leather—were simpler in form, generally consisting of ordinary straight lines, usually diagonal and of very modest ornamentation. After the mid-sixteenth century the panel stamp became popular and the town of Erfurt in Central Germany became famous as a centre of book-presentation.

The Low Countries, too, were not idle in the art. In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries Louvain was an important centre of book production and two Flemish binders, in the style of le Gascon, Magnus (d. 1610) and Poncyn, achieved considerable fame.

¹ A fine example of their work is the binding L.2240-1913 in the Victoria and Albert Museum.

England, moreover, produced some fine work in a formal restrained manner, which came as a refreshment after the later continental work, whose decoration reached a degree of labyrinthine intricacy and teased the eye with its ceaseless twisting and turning, and its congeries of design.

(c) PRINTED BOOKS



PAGE OF AN EDITION OF *ÆSOP'S FABLES*, NAPLES, 1485

Whereas the written book was essentially intended for the few, the printed book provided for the many. A link between the two was the 'block-book' made up of a series of single prints bound together. The British Museum

possesses several of these 'block books'. A further stage in the development of the printed book is marked by the intermingling of paint with print in the initial letters and headings of chapters. Examples of this hybrid style are exhibited in the British Museum and in the Victoria and Albert Museum.

Mainz was the first great centre of printing, being the scene of action for Gutenberg (*c.* 1439), almost the inventor of the art. Only two books can definitely be associated with him, the 42-lined Bible (*c.* 1455) and the *Catholicum* (*c.* 1460). Gutenberg's associate was Fust who, with his son-in-law Schoeffer, printed the *Psalter* of 1457, the first dated printed book. Strasburg, Cologne and Nuremberg followed upon Mainz in importance as centres of printing.

In Italy, the first press was started at the Benedictine monastery of Subiaco under Sweynheym and Pannartz who, after the publication in 1465 of their *Lucantius* (copy in King's Library) moved to Rome, taking with them the tradition of the art of printing. Roman characters were then used in imitation of the calligraphy of the early Humanists. From Rome, through the medium of Johann Speier (1469) the art progressed to Venice where, at the end of the century, Aldus brought back the spirit of ancient Hellas by setting up a workshop where nothing but Greek was spoken, and the Greek type as well as the 'Aldine Italic' was employed. Copies of the Aldine *Aristotle* and *Virgil* are in the British Museum (King's Library).

In France, Paris and Lyons became noted for their printed books, whilst, in the Netherlands, Caxton was heralding his future English fame by the publication at Bruges of the *Recueil des Histoires de Troye* (*c.* 1475), produced under the collaboration of Colard Mansion. A copy is in the King's Library, British Museum. A hundred years later

(1571) the famous house of Plantin at Antwerp issued its Polyglot Bible (King's Library), a compendium of the Gospels in various languages including Hebrew, Greek, Latin, Syriac and Chaldee.

CHAPTER III

BRONZES, MEDALS, ARMOUR AND ENAMELS

(a) BRONZES

THE art of working in bronze was passed to Italy from Byzantium, and the first great bronze doors, as well as church bells in Southern Italy and Sicily, in Pisa and Venice, were the work of Greek or Byzantine artists. The austerity of the Byzantine tradition was rigidly followed until the fourteenth century, when Andrea Pisano executed with extreme simplicity his famous bronze doors. The seal was set upon the fashion for working in bronze by the great competition in the year 1400 for the execution of the doors of the Florentine Baptistery, in which della Quercia, Brunelleschi and Ghiberti were enrolled among the candidates. After that event, sculptors in bronze followed closely on each other's heels, and monumental works in bronze were everywhere set up.

It was not until towards the end of the fifteenth century that attempts were made by Italian artists at small detached figures in bronze,¹ and the small statuettes which then

¹ Certain small figures in bronze dating from the early quattrocento exist, but they are not independent statuettes, being part of a big monument or models for a larger scheme. The majority of the small bronzes were made by the '*cire perdue*' method, that is, cast from a wax model which is destroyed in the process. The wax is thinly laid over a fireproof core, roughly shaped to the design, which enables the cast to come out hollow, thus reducing the weight and expense of the bronze. The wax-covered core is then imbedded in clay to form a mould and is afterwards baked, the wax running out through vents left for the purpose. The

became the fashion were chiefly of Florentine origin. Perhaps the best-known Italian bronze statue on a scale less than life-size is the 'Mercury' by Gian Bologna in the Bargello, of which many versions and copies exist in London and elsewhere ; but the supreme exponent of the statuette was Andrea Briosco, il Riccio (1470-1532), whose work in this genre was by far the richest and most various during the whole of the Renaissance epoch.

The subjects undertaken by Riccio were innumerable, (portrait studies ; equestrian statuettes ; classical subjects ; candlesticks ; bells ; lamps ; inkstands), but all reveal a common quality of fineness of technique and swiftness of handling, and all have certain unmistakable characteristics of detail. Riccio was deeply interested in botany and zoology, and nearly all his work is ornamented with garlands of flowers, branches of fruit and other foliated designs, as well as fantastic creations from the plant and animal world. One detail he scarcely ever failed to include in his work : the little Cockle Shell, and few subjects defeated his ingenuity for finding his sign a place. In portrait-pieces, he would conceal it in the head-dress or hair-decoration ; in more elaborate works he would add it to the plinth or pedestal and in equestrian statues he would love to hide it in the horse's harness.

One of the most famous of Riccio's small figure-pieces is the 'Warrior on Horseback' in the Victoria and Albert Museum (Salting Bequest),¹ which is characteristic of Renaissance bronzes, with its rich ornamentation on the helmet and on the warrior's shoes, and the energy of line

method is very intricate and, if the mould is not kept air-tight, air-bubbles occur which impair the surface of the bronze. The whole process is elaborately described in Cellini's treatise and in the technical Introduction to Vasari's *Lives*. Cellini, too, in his *Autobiography*, minutely describes the casting of his Perseus.

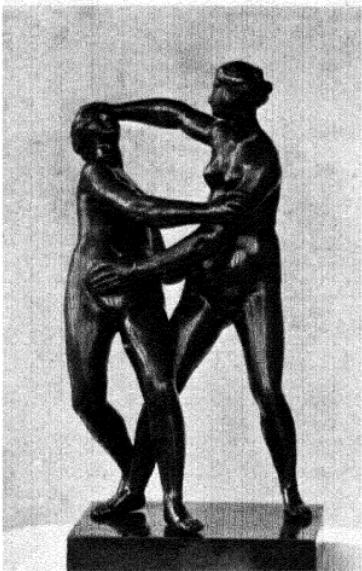
¹ Here the little cockle shell is in the Warrior's helmet.

which denotes his frisky steed. His grimacing expression, however, is peculiar to the artist and typifies Riccio's distinct taste for the grotesque. The Salting Bequest is wealthy in the works of Il Riccio and the two magnificent sphinxes (replicas of those on the great Paschal candlestick in the church of S. Antonio at Padua, a work which absorbed Riccio's attention for nearly ten years) can confidently be ascribed to the master's hand.

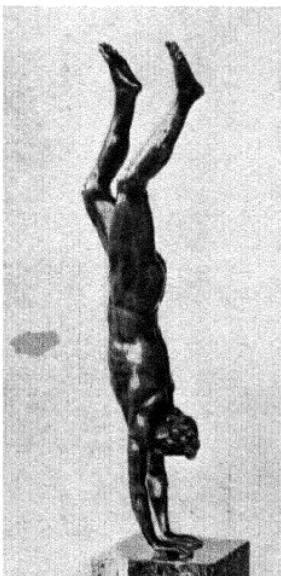
Other famous bronzes in the Victoria and Albert Museum are the statuette of 'Hercules with the Apples of Hesperides' (Salting Bequest); 'The Florentine Boar', probably by Antonio Susini, working after the antique (Salting Bequest); and several groups and statuettes by Gian Bologna.

The Wallace Collection contains some fine Italian bronzes. The 'Seated Figure' by Giovanni da Cremona is a work of distinction and repose, but more striking is the bronze 'Acrobat' ascribed to Domenico Poggini (1520-90) (Pl. XXI (b)), in which the muscular strain, imposed by the feat of balancing on the hands, is portrayed with such penetrating realism that the pressure on the wrists is almost communicated to the observer. The very curious 'Women Wrestling' (Pl. XXI (a)), also in the Wallace Collection, ascribed to a Flemish sculptor working in Italy late in the sixteenth century, is so modern in the broad treatment of its waving diagonals, and the flat, enlarged expression of the hands, that it might almost be the work of one of our contemporaries, such as Maurice Lambert or Aristide Maillol.

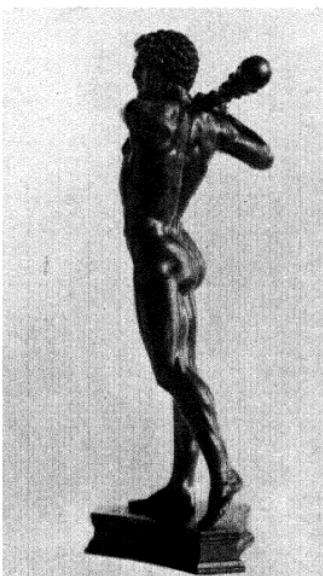
For perfection in the art of the statuette we have again to repair to the Wallace Collection, where stands the little 'Hercules Swinging his Club' (Pl. XXI (c)), by Francesco da Sant' Agata, a goldsmith of Padua. Although this exquisite work is not in metal but in boxwood, its style is such that it can fittingly be classed among the bronzes,



(a) WOMEN WRESTLING
Flemish. Wallace Collection



(b) AN ACROBAT
Domenico Poggini. Wallace Collection



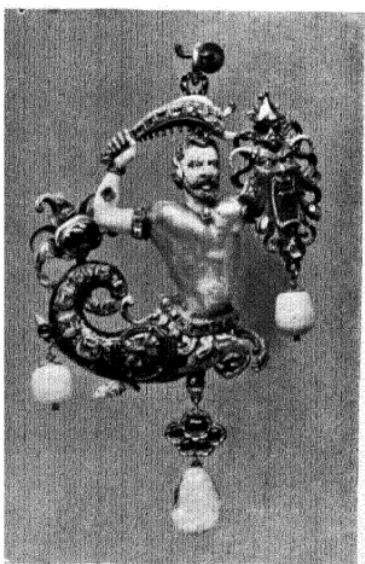
(c) HERCULES
Francesco da Sant'Agata. Wallace Collection



(a) THE MARTELLI MIRROR
Andrea Briosco (?). Victoria & Albert Museum



(b) MUSIC IN A GARDEN
Leonard Limousin II. British Museum



(c) THE CANNING JEWEL
Italian, XVIth Century.
Victoria & Albert Museum

in which medium numerous statuettes of Hercules exist. This little statuette is of the greatest celebrity and our information upon it is as ample as its size is miniature. In addition to the inscription round the base, '*Opus Francisci Aurificis P.*', we have the early testimony of a contemporary, Bernardino Scardenone, who, in his *De Antiquitate urbis Patavii*, compiled before the middle of the sixteenth century, refers to a '*Herculem buxeum Francisci Argentarii Patavinii*', then belonging to Marcantonio Massimo, a nobleman of Padua. The writer goes on to say that it was a marvel of art, worthy of Pheidias or Polycleitus, and records the fact that it was carved by Francesco da Sant' Agata in 1520—(*ut audio) per ocium*—(' for fun (so I hear) ')—and valued at one hundred ducats.

(b) MEDALS

Medals, perhaps more than all other products of artistic activity, are a collector's art, and to those who have the love of them they bring before their eyes a pageant of the past. It need not then be wondered at that, in the Renaissance epoch, Italy, with her love of antiquity and her close relation with the classics, was the first to develop the art. But numismatists were numerous in Italy long before the great reflowering, for, of all objects of antiquity, perhaps the commonest were the coins of the Roman Empire, which were constantly being discovered in Italy in huge quantities and were of great interest to all, who were keen to collect the portraits of the rulers of ancient Rome. From the earliest times there must have been antiquaries to whom these portraits gave refreshment to their historic sense, and as the Middle Ages reached their maturity we know that such men as Petrarch and Cola di Rienzo collected antique coins and gems with fervour, and that Petrarch used to obtain his share from vine-dressers who brought them to him in Rome from the fields. To Petrarch

the collecting of coins was a passion, and in 1355 he arranged an audience with the Emperor Charles IV at Mantua, especially to show him some coins of the ancient Emperors. But Petrarch was not alone among men of distinction to foster the love of coins. In 1433 the famous scholar Cyriac of Ancona met the newly-elected Emperor Sigismund at Siena and, showing him a gold coin of Trajan, urged him to prepare a crusade against the Turks. Alfonso, King of Naples, too, collected coins of the famous Emperors and, above all others, of Julius Caesar, which he preserved with the utmost care and locked away in an ivory cabinet. Moreover, he became the patron of Pisanello. With the advent of the Renaissance, the collecting of coins took on a double significance and to the interest in the object's history or ethics¹ was added that of its artistic qualities. Coins, moreover, extended their meaning and the ambitious, splendour-loving princes of Florence desired to flatter their vanity by having their own portrait cast or struck upon a coin. At first, the difficulty of size arose, for the tiny coins of the fifteenth century gave little scope for noble portraiture and the portrait-medal was therefore adopted.² By this indulgence to the vainglory of princes, a new art was created, distinct from the great world currency of the Roman Empire and one which had nothing but vanity at its root. But the petty cause had a glorious result and in Pisanello, the greatest of the medallists, Italy added one more brilliant feather to her cap of fame.

¹ Alfonso of Naples was deeply interested in the ethical point of view revealed by coins and it is said that, when he acquired a coin of Nero on which the Emperor claimed to have established a world peace by closing the Temple of Janus, he verbally denounced the Roman Emperor for his arrogant conduct.

² The portrait testoons of Italy, of the end of the fifteenth century, are among the finest productions in the history of coinage. A series illustrating the development of portraiture is exhibited in the British Museum.

The early medals of the Renaissance, those of Pisanello, Alberti and Matteo dei Pasti, were executed by the '*cire perdue*' process (cast, like bronzes, from wax models, which were destroyed in the process). As the fifteenth century progressed, the method of 'striking' (stamping with hardened steel dies like coins) instead of casting, grew in favour, although it is incorrect to say that after 1550 the cast medal had disappeared. The cast medal, indeed, had another fifty years of life to run, but the Courts of Rome and Florence desired it no longer and preferred the machine-made monotony of the 'striking' process. The striking die, indeed, though hailed like most narcotics to the energy as a great technical advance, brought about the decline of the medal, for this indolent method of punching a ready-made design resulted in tedious replicas and removed the necessity for the loving care which the old-time artist had expended upon the preparation of each fresh mould.

Pisanello (c. 1395–1455) was the inventor of the portrait-medal. It is said that the idea was suggested to him by the arrival in 1438 in Ferrara of the Emperor John VIII Palaeologus, who made a great impression on the artist as the last living representative of the grand tradition of the Roman Empire.

The success of the portrait-medal was complete and from 1438–49 medals were continuously issued from Pisanello's workshop. But, astonishing masterpieces as they were, the artist considered his medals as secondary to his paintings—(perhaps he regarded them as convenient replicas of portraits to send to friends ; engraving was then undiscovered and methods of transport of works of art were difficult)—and he usually signed his work **OPVS PISANI PICTORIS.**

Perhaps Pisanello's most famous medal is that which he made to commemorate the marriage in 1444 of Leonello

d'Este, Marquess of Ferrara, with Maria of Aragon, natural daughter of Alfonso of Naples.¹ On the obverse is a fine, clear-cut portrait of Leonello d'Este,² with an elongated skull such as well might contain the brains of this enlightened patron of music, literature and the arts, and on the reverse there is a beautiful allegorical design with Leonello represented as a lion learning to sing from a scroll held by the little God of Love. The Este eagle, perhaps disdainful of this undignified concession to a mere child by the king of beasts, is perched on a leafless tree near by, looking the other way.

Italy, though the first and by far the greatest home of medallists,³ was not the only country in which the art of the medal flourished, and Germany and the Netherlands soon adopted the method. German medals were usually less imaginative than the Italian ; on the obverse was a portrait and on the reverse, if not left plain, was a coat of arms. The merit of the German medals does not, indeed, lie in their ingenuity of execution or design, but in the vividness of their portraiture and the skill with which they are composed. Dürer, of course, with his mind alert for any new discovery, was fascinated by the idea of the portrait-medal and was the first great artist to design for

¹ An example of this medal is in the Victoria and Albert Museum (Salting Bequest). With it are fine specimens of the John Palaeologus, Ludovico Gonzaga, Sigismundo Malatesta, and other medals. In the Wallace Collection is an example of Pisanello's second medal, Gianfrancesco Gonzaga of Mantua, but its authenticity has been doubted. In the British Museum and Victoria and Albert Museum are extensive collections of medals in which all the finest specimens are to be found.

² Pisanello's painted portrait of Leonello, in the Museum of Bergamo, was exhibited in the Italian Exhibition 1930, No. 149.

³ Among other famous Italian medallists were Sperandio of Mantua, Matteo dei Pasti, Giovanni Boldù of Venice, Pietro di Milano, Leon Battista Alberti, Nicolò Spinelli, called Nicolò Fiorentino.

them, although it is questionable whether he actually made any medals himself. It is most likely that his work ended with the designing, for the die had to be made by a professional die engraver. A fine example of a medal associated with the name of Dürer is the magnificent portrait of Charles V, presented by the city of Nuremberg to the Emperor as an act of homage in 1521. An example in lead is in the Wallace Collection and one in silver is in the Victoria and Albert Museum (Salting Bequest).

In Germany, Augsburg was the centre of the medallists' activity and Hans Daucher, the sculptor, was one of the most illustrious workers in the art. His style is a very special one, and his portraits—characteristic of those of a low-relief sculptor—are always broad, full-face portraits with a great width of shoulder filling nearly half the face of the medal, and a broad Henry VIII hat.¹ To Hans Daucher is attributed the fine silver medal of Charles V, Ferdinand I and Mary, Queen of Burgundy, in the Victoria and Albert Museum (Salting Bequest).

In the Netherlands, the Italian example of the medal was introduced by Nicolò Spinelli, who was employed at the Court of Charles the Bold, but, as in Germany, maturity was not attained until a great native artist took the lead. In Germany it had been Albrecht Dürer; in the Low Countries it was Quintin Matsys, the eminent painter and friend of Erasmus, Holbein and Sir Thomas More. In the Wallace Collection and also in the British Museum are specimens of a famous medal of Erasmus, attributed to Matsys on account of a letter written to a friend by Erasmus in 1528.² The ascription has given rise to much discussion,

¹ There is a medal of Henry VIII (1526), probably from Daucher's hand, although it cannot have been done from life but was, perhaps, inspired by a Holbein portrait.

² 'I wonder where that sculptor of yours got my portrait; unless perhaps he has the one which Quintin at Antwerp cast in bronze. Dürer has painted me but nothing like.'

but no doubts of authenticity can detract from the brilliance of the clear-cut profile, which defines the great scholar whose expression of determination justifies his noble motto '*I yield to none*'. Sir George Hill, the foremost authority on medals, does not spare his praise of this work and says that it must surely rank among the greatest portrait-medals of the world.

In France, the medal had a less interesting history than in other countries, for there it seldom broke loose from the bondage of officialdom and artists of the medal usually worked for the official commissioners of the Mint. In the last decade of the fifteenth century a group of interesting medals were made, commemorating the visits of the royal family to the provincial cities of France.¹ In 1494, when Anne of Brittany entered Lyons, the city presented her with a golden lion bearing a cup of 100 gold medals. Jean Perréal (Maître de Moulins), the Queen's Court painter, designed the lion, and two skilled goldsmiths of the city engraved the dies. In the same year, when the Queen entered Vienne with the dauphin, Charles-Orland, a medal was struck, representing the Queen seated with the little dauphin standing on her knee.² In 1499, moreover, Michel Colombe, the famous sculptor, designed a medal to be presented to Louis XII on his entry into Tours, an occasion of great solemnity, for which Jean Foucquet was enlisted to provide a pageant play.

The most magnificent of the medals commemorating the loyalty of subjects to their sovereign was that made in Lyons on the occasion of the second entry of Louis XII and his consort, Anne of Brittany, in March 1500.³ This

¹ Cf. the medal after designs by Dürer presented to Charles V at Nuremberg.

² A version of this medal, in silver-gilt, is in the Victoria and Albert Museum (Salting Bequest).

³ A version in bronze is in the Wallace Collection.

tribute to the royal pair was larger and more ornate than any preceding medal, and measured about $4\frac{1}{2}$ inches in diameter.

As the sixteenth century advanced, French medals declined in interest, and, under François I and Henri II, medallists became more and more accomplished and more and more official, so that they finally leave us cold. Henri II, however, in 1552, employed Etienne de Laune, the famous engraver, to supervise the new Mint. But his office was short-lived, and after him there is little work that arouses our enthusiasm until the sixteenth century is over. Towards the end of the century, Charles IX appointed Germain Pilon, the sculptor, to the office of Comptroller-General of Effigies, but his post was not a happy one and the result was that Pilon provided the King with a series of competent, but monotonous court medallions. But at his death, in 1590, there was no one at all to fill his place, and the century ran to an end without an artist and with only the merest artisans to further the noble art of medal making.

(c) ARMOUR

This can be divided into two groups, Gothic (which does not apply to our period) and Maximilian. The former is greatly superior in grace, lightness and utility. Armour of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries became heavier and clumsier, although the decoration was often highly skilful and elaborate, form being sacrificed to ornament. By the 'Maximilian' type (1486-1519) fluted armour is denoted; each flute being made for the purpose of parrying the impetus of a sharp weapon. Moreover, the flutings added to the strength of the suit without increasing its weight. Another characteristic of the type is the square-toed *sabatons* which took the place of the pointed *solerets*. There are fine examples of the

'Maximilian' armour in the Wallace Collection, where there is also an unusual 'Three-quarter suit' decorated with slashes (German, c. 1520) in imitation of contemporary costume. These 'slashes' may, in their turn, have been originally intended to represent the cuts received in warfare.

In the sixteenth century, decoration was produced mainly by means of etching, chasing, embossing, damascening¹ and gilding. Another favourite way of heightening the decorative effect (particularly in German suits) was to blacken a part of the surface so as to show up more strikingly the rest of the bright steel. Such a method of decoration is employed on the Bavarian Equestrian Suit, in the Wallace Collection. Italy led the way in supplying Europe with its finest armour, and Milan produced the most celebrated armourers in the family of Piccinino. In the Wallace Collection is a celebrated Half-suit known as that of Alfonso II, Duke of Ferrara. It is unmarked but is ascribed to Lucio Piccinino. To the same hand has also been attributed, but with no degree of certainty, the Oval Shield in the Wallace Collection, bearing at the top the interlaced crescents and the conjoined monograms of Henri II and Diane de Poitiers. The centre is embossed with an elaborate composition representing Scipio Africanus receiving the keys of Carthage after the battle of Zama. A breast-plate, embossed and damascened with gold and silver, and a back-plate, embossed and gilt, both attributed to Lucio Piccinino (Milanese, c. 1570), are in the Victoria and Albert Museum.

The Tower of London is our greatest repository for

¹ Damascening is usually a process of engraving a design on metal and adding an inlay of gold and silver wire. A striking example of damascening on steel and iron can be found in the pair of stirrups made for Emperor Charles V by Antonio Campi in the Victoria and Albert Museum (Salting Bequest).

historic suits of armour and its collection of Italian suits includes the portion of a suit for Foot Combats which probably belonged to Henry VIII. The bascinet bears the stamp of the Missaglia, a Milanese family of armourers.

Examples of German armourers' work in the Tower of London include the armour presented by the Emperor Maximilian I to Henry VIII and made by Conrad Seusenhofer. The suit is decorated with the Tudor rose, the pomegranate of Katherine of Aragon and the fleur-de-lis. A suit of Tilting Armour in the Wallace Collection for the 'Over the Barriers' Tourney (which has survived in the Palio at Siena) bears on the back and breast-plates the mark of the celebrated Augsburg armourer, Anton Peffenhausen (1525-1603).

In the Tower, the Wallace Collection and the Victoria and Albert Museum are numerous examples of morions, helmets, horse-armour, pageant-shields, saddles, stilettos, daggers and rapiers.¹

In the King's Guard Chamber at Hampton Court Palace is the famous collection of old arms—nearly three thousand in number—arranged on the wall in a star-shaped pattern for William III by a gunsmith who also decorated in a similar fashion the Gun Chambers at the Tower and at Windsor Castle.

In addition to plate, leather played an important part in the manufacture of Renaissance armour. On the Continent, treatment of leather became an artistic craft (*cuir bouilli*). The leather was treated with hot water to make it more pliable. An historic example of this craft is the Sword Scabbard of Caesar Borgia in the Victoria and Albert Museum.

¹ The Spanish rapier was introduced into England in Elizabeth's reign when the English, with their characteristic contempt of foreign products, said it was 'only good to spit a duck on'.

(d) ENAMELS

Enamel work was a favourite form of decoration among the French throughout the Middle Ages, and in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries Limoges was the centre of a great industry for decorating objects in copper with enamel, chiefly for church uses (crosses, ciboria, pyxes, incense-boats, gospel-covers, candlesticks), although secular objects (caskets, marriage coffers, *gemelliōns*, and armorial pendants for horse-trappings)¹ were numerous. The usual method was that of *champlevé* enamel (enamel fused into incisions on the metal). Two fine examples of this early style, in London, are the Cover for the Book of the Gospels in the Victoria and Albert Museum (Salting Bequest), with the Figure of Christ in Majesty surrounded by the symbols of the Four Evangelists; and the two gilt figures of Saints, dating from the end of the thirteenth century (perhaps the ends of a reliquary), mounted on plaques of diapered enamel. These are in the Wallace Collection.

But with the approach of the Renaissance the method changed, although the scene remained the same. Limoges retained its importance as the nucleus of all enamel work, but towards the end of the fifteenth century, the Limousine artists, perhaps through their familiarity with the process of painting on stained glass, had the idea of applying the method of enamelled copper. Thus it was that the painted enamel (enamel spread thinly on the surface of the metal by means of a spatula or sometimes a brush) came into being, and that the old conventions proper to enamelling

¹ It is not known with certainty why this city devoted itself to this particular art, nor where the necessary copper was procured. Perhaps Spain was the source, for Limoges was connected with the southern peninsula through the pilgrimages to Roncevaux and Campostella.

were abandoned in the making of an art, which was to stand half-way between that of the painter and the goldsmith.¹

The first individual master of painted enamel is thought to have been the enigmatic 'Monvaerni', whose identity—perhaps even his existence—is still a mystery, and through his mere obscurity, he stands alone. After him, the celebrated enamel workers of Limoges ran in families. Nardon Pénicaud (c. 1470–c. 1542), the head of the famous Pénicaud family, is again almost a legendary figure since, although his fame is great, the difficulties in assigning work to him are considerable. The pieces attributed to him are generally in the form of triptychs and are confined entirely to religious subjects.² Nardon applied his enamel on to a ground of white, the designs being drawn in bistre. The flesh colours are on a violet base and the dominant colour notes in his work are deep plum, turquoise and emerald green. Although the range of colour is limited, Nardon's efforts are of great splendour, which he heightened by adding foils under cabochon. The high lights on the drapery are stippled, and '*paillons*' (drops of gilding covered with translucent enamel) are very frequent in his work. Gold is also much used for the hair.³

London is fortunate in possessing several works which have been ascribed to the great Nardon. In the British Museum (Barwell Bequest) is the famous triptych, with the Entombment between the Deposition from the Cross and the 'Resurrection.' The composition is based on a

¹ Objects, which may be regarded as precursors of the new style, seem to have been made earlier in other places. For example, the enamel medallions (*en camâieu*: in gold on enamelled ground) by Jean Foucquet (d. 1481) preserved at Paris and Berlin (French Exhibition, 1932, Nos. 580 m, 580 n).

² In most cases the paintings were not original compositions, but copies or adaptations of contemporary (mostly German) engravers.

³ Each of these enamel colours had to be subjected to a special firing.

print by Schöngauer, but the colouring is entirely Nardon's own, with its superb quality of tone and its flashing blue. In the Victoria and Albert Museum is a fine collection of early Limoges enamels, including the celebrated 'Louis XII Triptych' attributed to Nardon, with the Annunciation in the centre flanked by portraits of Louis XII and Anne of Brittany with their patron saints. The predominant characteristic of this enamel is its luscious colouring, a symphony in turquoise, emerald, cobalt and deep plum, relieved by gold *paillons*, translucent enamels and touches of opaque white. In the Wallace Collection, too, is a 'Virgin and Child' by Nardon, or by one of his school, which, in the radiant white skin of the Virgin and her broad forehead, is reminiscent of Foucquet's picture of Agnès Sorel as the Virgin in the gallery at Antwerp (French Exhibition, 1932).

After 1530, the Gothic tradition lost grip and the Flemish and German influences declined in favour of Italian. Medievalism, indeed, had had its day, and the crescent moon of the Renaissance was rising in the sky. Under the paramount influence of Italy, the scheme of colour became less sumptuous and the copper plates were thinner and more convex. To this Italianate period belong the other members of the Pénicaud group. Jean Pénicaud I (probably a brother of Nardon) was, however, still transitional, for in his early work he resembles Nardon, although later he was influenced by Renaissance engravings. The brilliant colours, however, of Nardon did not attract him, and he kept his palette very low with yellowish-brown tones prevailing. For his flesh tints he elaborated Nardon's violet hue and modelled the flesh by '*empâtement*' (semi-translucent white enamel on purple).¹ Jean Pénicaud's

¹ A triptych with the Crucifixion bordered by the Carrying of the Cross and the Deposition, once attributed to Nardon and now ascribed to Jean Pénicaud I, is in the Victoria and Albert Museum (Salting Bequest).

son and grandson (known as Jean Pénicaud II and Jean Pénicaud III) broke more definitely into the Italian style and abandoned the use of a white ground for the whole of their figures. Both were artists of distinction, especially Jean Pénicaud III, who designed many of his own compositions, and was not content, like most other enamellers, to feed from the copyist's spoon.

The later Pénicauds were the first to popularize painting in *grisaille* (the style in which the figures are entirely, or almost entirely, applied in opaque white enamel on to a black background) and Pénicaud III practised scarcely any other style.¹ Another prolific artist in *grisaille* was Pierre Reymond (d. c. 1584) who is well represented in the British Museum, and in the Wallace Collection. His prolificacy, indeed, was his downfall and his talent was marred by his own over-production.

The height of the sixteenth century brought great prosperity to the enamel-workers, and at Limoges, during that period, was a group of artists whose work is so alike as almost to be indistinguishable. Most notable among them, however, are Pierre Courtois, Reymond's pupil and imitator, notable for his audacity in decorating the largest plaques known²; Jean (dit Vigier), chiefly known for his salmon-coloured flesh tints and his use of sparkling *paillons*; Jean Court, noted for the softness in the modelling of his figures and their lovely, luminous quality; and Suzanne de Court, the only woman worker in enamel,

¹ Black and white were the dominant notes of *grisaille*, but the high lights were touched up with gold and sometimes colour was used for the flesh tints, the later workers, unlike the earlier, having a pinkish-red at their command. A fine example of the *grisaille* style, perhaps by Pénicaud III, is the 'Dish after Raphael's Triumph of Galatea' in the Wallace Collection.

² Twelve plaques 5½ feet high were executed for the decoration of the Château de Madrid. Some of them are now in the Louvre.

whose works are marvels of translucent colour, set off by the extreme dead whiteness of the flesh tints.¹

Another celebrated family of enamel-workers was that of Limousin, of whom the greatest was Léonard (c. 1505–c. 1575). Léonard Limousin was the most versatile of the later artists in enamel and he made use of all the various styles, combining all the processes then known. At first, he was much attracted by the engravings of Dürer and those of Marcantonio Raimondi but, being summoned to the French Court, the charm of the school of Fontainebleau soon seduced him from his former loves. Léonard I is chiefly famous for his portraits in enamel and he has left numerous panels and medallions, usually with bright blue backgrounds, representing famous personages of his time.² The British Museum possesses good examples of his portraiture in the busts of Catherine of Lorraine and a Youth, in the Waddesdon Bequest, and that of the Dauphin, son of Francis I. Although Léonard Limousin did not employ a wide range of colours—seven or eight was, perhaps, his maximum—he achieved an effect of unusual brilliance. His flesh tints, too, are exceptionally warm and soft, being hatched and stippled in a reddish bistre over white enamel.

The Limousin family were numerous and long-lived, and most of them practised the art of enamelling, the last of them being Joseph (great-grandson of the first Léonard) who lived on well into the seventeenth century. None of the descendants could attain the standard of their patriarch in style or sensibility, but Léonard II, the nephew of the

¹ Examples of the work of all these artists can be found either in the British Museum, Victoria and Albert Museum or Wallace Collection. In the British Museum is a series of plates illustrating the story of Psyche, ascribed to Pénicaud III. In the Wallace Collection is an elegant ewer, by Pierre Reymond, signed P.R.

² According to tradition, he painted over 2,000 enamels.

great Léonard, had taste and imagination, as the delicious little plaque, 'Music in a Garden' (Pl. XXII (b)) in the British Museum (Barwell Bequest) will testify. This little work contains an unusual quality, which keeps it apart from the general line of Limoges enamels. The quintessence of the Renaissance spirit seems to emanate from its simple lyrical representation of three stately maidens making music on a moonlit lawn.

The last of the Limoges enamel-workers were the families of Laudin and Nouailher, but their work is mostly soulless, consisting of mere *objets de piété* made for commercial purposes. In them, the wasting disease of decadence began to make its mark, and from that time on, the noble tradition of Limoges enamel painting fell into unremitting decline.

CHAPTER IV

CERAMICS, JEWELLERY AND PLATE, IRONWORK, FURNITURE, MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS, GLASS, TEXTILES AND IVORIES

(a) CERAMICS

(i) *Spanish Lustred Pottery*

THIS ware, often known as Hispano-Moresque, is exclusively associated with Spain, although its sources are, probably, Eastern. The method of covering the surface of a vessel with a thin coating of tin enamel before applying a painted decoration is almost certainly Oriental in origin, although the actual provenance is unknown. No ware of this kind was produced in Europe before that made in Spain, and the earliest examples of Spanish tin-enamelled ware were the work of Moorish potters resident in the Peninsula.

The art of lustre, too, came from the East; perhaps

from Mesopotamia ; and it is probable that it was introduced into Spain by the Saracenic conquerors. The process of metallic lustre ware consists in painting over the glaze or enamel, previously fixed in the kiln, a layer of pigments containing sulphides of copper or silver. By a special method of firing, in which a cloud of dense smoke from burning brushwood has to be admitted at a certain stage of the proceedings, a thin metallic film is left on the painted portions of the surface which, when polished, assumes an iridescent hue.

Lustre ware in Spain was an ancient art. There is a mention of it in the writings of an Arab geographer of the twelfth century, when Southern Spain was under the domination of the Almohad Moors from North Africa.

Of this very early ware none exists, although in the Alhambra at Granada there is a celebrated vase in tin-enamelled lustre ware of the fourteenth century. The numerous examples, however, which can be seen in most museums of Europe and in London, particularly in the British Museum, Victoria and Albert Museum (Salting Bequest) and the Wallace Collection, date from the fifteenth century. They mostly come from factories in the region of Valencia, which at that time was under the rule of the Kings of Aragon and Sicily.¹

The ware became very popular and was shipped in huge consignments to Italy, where it remained in favour, until the decline of the lustre into a brassy flamboyance at the end of the sixteenth century.

¹ A dish in the Victoria and Albert Museum (Salting Bequest) bears the arms of Aragon and Sicily. Others in this and the British Museum bear the armorial devices of Florentine families showing the favour with which the ware was received in Italy. Further famous examples in the Victoria and Albert Museum are a bowl showing a Portuguese vessel, bearing on her unfurled sails the arms of a royal house ; and a large dish with the arms of Mary of Castile, wife of Alfonso V of Aragon.

(ii) Italian Maiolica

The origin of maiolica, as its name implies, was also to be found in Spanish territory. The art evolved out of the tin-enamelled earthenware, which was exported in great quantities to Italy from the Island of Majorca, the commercial dumping-ground between Italy and Spain. The term 'maiolica' was originally applied to ware made in definite imitation of the Spanish, such as lustred faience, but its use was later extended to all forms of lustred productions from all ceramic centres of Italy.

The process was a complicated one and needed much more delicate handling than that of Hispano-Moresque ware. The pottery, baked in biscuit, had first to be dipped in a bath of glaze before the painting could be applied, and the whole success of these early stages depended upon the rapidity with which the object could be withdrawn from the glaze and on the thickness of the adhering coat which should not exceed that of glove-leather. The painting, too, necessitated the most minute treatment, and only the finest brushes were used, being made of goats' and asses' hair or, finer still, the whiskers of rats and mice. After a process of drying, the vessel was submitted to another coating of glaze (*coperta*) to fix the paint before the final firing.¹

The chief centres of ceramic production in Italy were as follows² :—

Faenza.—This little city between Forli and Ravenna was one of the oldest centres of the ceramic industry. The

¹ The whole process is elaborately described in the famous manual, *Li Tre Libri dell' Arte del Vasaio*, by Cavaliere Cipriano Piccolpassi of Castel Durante (1548), of which the original MS. is on exhibition in the Victoria and Albert Museum.

² Examples from the various factories of Italian maiolica are to be found especially in the British Museum, Victoria and Albert Museum, and the Wallace Collection.

most important of its many factories was that of the Casa Pirotà, chiefly famous for its decoration of grotesques painted in dark blue over a greyish blue enamel, with high lights in opaque white. This usually surrounded a figure or heraldic subject in colours.

Numerous fine examples of Faenza ware are in the Victoria and Albert Museum (Salting Bequest), the large two-handled vase and the dish with the Judgment of Paris (dated 1527), being splendid works of the period. Another significant piece in the Victoria and Albert Museum is the dish by Maestro Ieronimo of Forli, one of the most skilled of all maiolica-painters. This dish is the only piece on which the master's signature *Mo. iero da Forli* occurs. Though there is no evidence of ceramic factories existing at Forli, it is likely that Master Ieronimo, a native of Forli, worked at one of the factories of the not-far-distant Faenza.

Caffaggiolo.—This was the name given to a private factory founded early in the sixteenth century by the family of Factorini at the *castello* of Caffaggiolo near Florence. The distinguishing signs of their ware are a rich even glaze and the use of deep cobalt-blue. This colour, frequently used as a ground for the subject, was laid on with a coarse brush of which the strokes are often noticeable. Other favourite colours of the makers of Caffaggiolo were bright yellow, orange, copper-green; and an opaque Indian red. Owing to the connexions of the Factorini family with the Medici, the heraldic devices and mottoes of the Medici often occur on the ware. Notable examples of Caffaggiolo ware in the Victoria and Albert Museum are the Dish (Salting Bequest) representing Judith riding on horseback, followed by her servant who carries the head of Holofernes, and another larger dish representing a triumphant procession (a favourite subject of this factory) of Leo X, who, borne aloft, distributes

blessings right and left. An interesting plate in the same case shows a maiolica painter at work.

Siena.—Much maiolica was made at Siena during the Renaissance period. Its characteristics may be said to be its vigorous design and powerful colouring, with a frequent use of orange-yellow.

In the Victoria and Albert Museum (Salting Bequest), is a plate of great beauty, bearing a figure of S. Mary Magdalene. In the Wallace Collection is a fine decorative disk, perhaps of Siena ware, representing the Virgin and Child, after a fifteenth-century Netherlandish engraving.

Deruta.—This is a little town in the regions of Perugia, which became famous for its production of large dishes, painted in blue and yellowish tones and finished with a mother-of-pearl lustre. The centre of the dish was usually filled with a figure—perhaps the bust of a woman—and embellished with flowers or scrolls. A fine dish in the Victoria and Albert Museum (Salting Bequest) has confronted figures of a lady and gentleman, whilst another well-known example in the Wallace Collection has a central medallion of a mounted warrior in Oriental costume. Sometimes the manufacture dwindled into banal sentimentality, as the dish in the Victoria and Albert Museum, bearing clasped hands above flames and below a burning heart pierced with arrow, will show.

Gubbio.—From this little town in the Duchy of Urbino on the Italian slopes of the Apennines, perhaps the most beautiful of all maiolica ware was produced. Its distinguishing trait was its rich ruby lustre, brought to perfection by Giorgio Andreoli, known to the world as Maestro Giorgio.¹ London is lucky in possessing two very famous

¹ Giorgio's finest period was short-lived, being between 1520-5. After 1530 his quality of design deteriorated, although his colours remained rich and lovely to the end.

works by this great artist. The dish representing the Three Graces in the Victoria and Albert Museum (after a drawing by Raphael) is a marvel of compact design and translucent colour, but the celebrated dish of Women Bathing in the Wallace Collection (signed and dated 1525) is a more ambitious work, with its lovely receding landscape of woods and slim watercourses leading to a hillside city, and its adroitly distributed foreground group of women whose pattern of entwining arms makes an unforgettable arabesque of line.

Castel Durante.—This is the name of another town in the Duchy of Urbino, whose productions in maiolica are characterized by the use of conventional design, such as grotesques, trophies of arms or mixed instruments. The originator of the style may have been the artist whose signature, *Zona Maria V(asa)ro*, occurs on a well-known bowl, formerly in the collection of the Duke of Newcastle, and to whom a bowl with St. Jerome in his study in the Victoria and Albert Museum (Salting Bequest) may also be ascribed.

The dishes of Castel Durante resemble those of Deruta in their predilection for a central decoration of busts, portraits and figures. Many of the dishes have a design of oak-branches surrounding the central medallion. This design, known as *cerquato*, is peculiar to the ware of Castel Durante, and is said to have been chosen as a compliment to the great Urbino family of Delle Rovere, who bore an oak on their coat of arms.

A fine example of the oak-leaf pattern is the dish in the Victoria and Albert Museum (Salting Bequest).

Urbino.—The capital of the Duchy was the most highly commercialized centre of the maiolica industry and, by 1540, when most of the other factories were on the decline, Urbino took the lead. But the style had changed, and not altogether for the better. The beautiful ornamental

motives of the earlier period were rejected in favour of elaborate subject painting and a plate, dish or vase lost its own intrinsic uses and became a mere surface on which to paint a classical or pastoral scene.¹ The white ground, however, came back into its own in the later examples, such as the numerous great cisterns, of which examples can be seen in the Victoria and Albert Museum and the Wallace Collection. The artists of Urbino adopted the custom of signing their works and most of the principal masters are, consequently, known by name. The first and by far the greatest was Nicola Pellipario (Nicola da Urbino) who came to the capital from Castel Durante. Among his most celebrated works was the service made for Isabella d'Este, wife of Francesco Gonzaga, Marquess of Mantua. A plate from this service, with the combined arms of Este and Gonzaga, is in the Victoria and Albert Museum (Salting Bequest).

Venice.—Although geographically isolated from the general line of the maiolica industry, Venice did not let the trend of ceramic art pass her by. Her most characteristic productions in pottery are the blue and white ware such as can be seen in most museums of Europe.

· *Sgraffiato Ware*.—This is a form of Italian earthenware in which the ordinary tin-enamelling has been replaced by a 'slip' or thin covering of fine white clay, through which the design, instead of being applied to the surface with a fine brush, is incised with a sharp instrument, so that the red or buff-coloured 'body' is laid bare. The colour is usually enlivened by splashes of green, yellow or

¹ In the Wallace Collection is an interesting example of a dish of the period before conventional ornamentation had finally been abandoned. The central medallion represents Crassus Enthroned, but this rather ponderous classical subject is surrounded by a deliciously gay and delicate decoration of grotesques on a white ground.

blue, applied before the final process of glazing. Three fine examples are in the Victoria and Albert Museum (Salting Bequest), whilst another well-known specimen is the dish in the Wallace Collection representing two patrician youths in a pine grove.

Medici Porcelain.—All the above varieties of Renaissance ceramics have been earthenware, but the earliest European porcelain was made in 1580 at a pottery in Florence in which Francesco de' Medici, Duke of Tuscany, took great interest. This porcelain is always painted in cobalt-blue under a glaze, with sometimes an addition of the outline in manganese-purple. The motives consist mainly of arabesques and conventional floral forms, more reminiscent of Persian than of Chinese modes of decoration. The mark is the Dome of Florence Cathedral above an F and two dots. In the Victoria and Albert Museum several examples of this uncommon ware are to be seen. They are specially interesting, being the prototype of the artificial porcelain of France and England. One pilgrim bottle is in the Salting Bequest. There are other examples in the main collection.

(iii) *French Earthenware*

The earliest form of Renaissance earthenware in France was the so-called Saint Porchaire or Henri Deux Ware, lead-glazed earthenware decorated with delicate designs and impressed with book-binders' stamps in cream-coloured paste, filled in with coloured clays. The place of origin of this ware is not certainly known, but students in the topography and heraldry of ceramics incline to the idea that it was the work of a potter of Poitou. The name of Henri II is given to the ware because the later pieces frequently bear the shield or arms of Henri, or the interlaced crescents of Diane de Poitiers. The latter sign

appears in the middle of a celebrated *tazza* in the Victoria and Albert Museum (Salting Bequest).¹

The most celebrated name in the history of French pottery is that of Bernard Palissy (1510-89) under whom the industry reached a second and completely individual stage. Palissy, the son of a modest glass-painter, was one of the noble pioneers of art who, by the sweat of his brow and the pain of his body, created a new art form. He was, too, a true product of the Renaissance, with a touch of that period's universality. He was glass-blower and glass-painter; geometrician; chemist; geologist; landscape gardener, and philosophic writer.

A plain white enamelled cup was the starting-point of his career as a potter, and, in his autobiography, he tells us that this domestic utensil excited him so much that he vowed 'like a man who gropes in the dark' to discover the secrets of its manufacture.² For sixteen years Palissy laboured on through hunger and want, neglecting all his business as a land surveyor for the sake of his researches. His debts reduced him to the lowest ebb of poverty and even the cries of his starving children were disregarded while he remained at his kiln. At first, failure appeared inevitable and it seemed that the glazes would never fuse. One day, after six days and nights spent at the open kiln, the enamels did not melt. In despair he cast into the furnace everything that he had; chairs, tables, the floor-

¹ Only about sixty pieces of this ware are known (in the Louvre, Cluny Museum, Victoria and Albert, and the Hermitage, also in a few great English, French or American private collections). The Victoria and Albert is richer in examples than any other collection and its exhibits illustrate the various periods of the manufacture, which became more elaborate and more architectural in the later work.

² It is not known what this piece of earthenware was like. It may have been a production of the German Hirsvogel, or a piece of Saint-Porchaire ware; or a specimen of Italian maiolica.

boards of his house and even the palings of his garden. The neighbours rushed up, thinking that in a fit of frenzy Palissy had burned his house. No matter. The enamels were fused, and instead of finding a maniac the neighbours discovered a newly created genius.

Success, however, comes slowly, and with Palissy the years of waiting were long. In 1548 the Connétable de Montmorency came into the Saintonge to suppress the revolution against the Salt Tax (*gabelle*), and there discovered the painstaking potter, whose simple achievements struck his nobleman's fancy. The Connétable built a workshop for Palissy at the *château* of Ecouen and established his position at the French Court to which, by way of contrast with its urbane sophistication, Palissy was appointed 'inventor of rustic pottery'.

From that time onwards, Palissy was famous; he became the personal favourite of Catherine de' Medici, for whom he designed a grotto in the Tuileries,¹ and he was a celebrated figure in Paris. He gave lectures on natural history; he startled the public by his ideas on springs and underground waters, and he was one of the first to enunciate the correct theory of fossilization.

For Palissy the wheel of Fortune was fickle, and vacillated back as well as forwards. In the fanatical outburst of the Ligue in 1588 he was ordered to leave Paris on pain of death. At his refusal to do so, he was cast into prison, and, at the age of eighty, he died in one of the darkest dungeons of the Bastille.

The fame of Palissy has been spread by his writings almost more than by his pottery. His autobiography, the expression of a brave soul, contains not only the details of his agitated life, but also intensely interesting reflec-

¹ In 1855 workmen, while digging a trench for a water-duct near the Tuileries, came across the remains of Palissy's furnaces and some of his pottery.

tions on agriculture, philosophy, religion, and the natural sciences. His predilection, however, for salamanders, eels, snails, frogs, crayfish and other freshwater fish and insects for the decoration of his dishes makes his work unmistakable.¹ Among the many who to-day read his book there are few who really care for the numberless dishes of his favourite style, in which the less comely inhabitants of the ponds of Saintes or the river-bed of the Seine act as embellishment. But, although the modelling is coarse and the subjects are curious, the design of a Palissy plate has often great decorative beauty and the colours are rich and delicately marbled, as the numerous examples in the Wallace Collection, the British Museum, and the Victoria and Albert Museum (Salting Bequest) will testify.

(iv) German Stoneware

This type of ceramic, best known as Grès Rhenan (a very dense and highly vitrified paste with a salt glaze) was much exported into England in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The chief centres of manufacture were Cologne, Westerwald, Raeren, Frechen and Sieberg. Numerous examples of each are represented in the Victoria and Albert Museum.

(b) JEWELLERY AND PLATE

Jewellery, of all the arts, is the one which is most closely associated with the personal adornment of women and, therefore, the one which has existed the longest and for which there has been the most continuous demand. In

¹ Palissy studied these creatures literally from the 'life' and he used to make casts from the actual creatures themselves. His knowledge of pond life was enormous. Zoologists have calculated that the number of species of animals, plants and insects which occur in Palissy's work runs into several hundreds.

the Middle Ages, jewellers were kept in constant employment and from the fourteenth century onwards examples of their skill have survived in great numbers. Throughout the fifteenth century the sumptuous medieval tradition was continued, and a lavish use of gems persisted in all forms of luxurious decoration. The jewellery of this time, however, although largely used for secular purposes and always made in lay workshops, was still influenced by the Church. Even the most uneccllesiastical adornments bore inscriptions in the form of texts or invocations, or were decorated with figures of saints or sacred persons. A jewel, moreover, in the Middle Ages, was often more of a charm than a mere ornament and was considered as an infallible prophylactic against the evil spirits.

But with the Renaissance came a fundamental change. The connexion between the jewel-maker and the church craftsman was entirely severed and the spirit expressed by jewellery was completely secular. Religious subjects then took a secondary place and the saints and martyrs of the Bible were supplanted by the goddesses and *amorini* of classical mythology. Enamel and *cabochon* gems were also largely abandoned in favour of faceted stones, diamonds, rubies, cameos, intaglio gems and mother-of-pearl. Rings were very much worn by men as well as women in Renaissance days ; Henry VIII is said to have owned 234 which he wore on all his fingers as well as on his thumbs. In the British Museum and the Victoria and Albert Museum are fine collections of episcopal and other rings.

Italy was naturally the country where the first and finest jewels of the new style were produced, since not only was she the home of the Renaissance, but also the country in which every painter and sculptor was a goldsmith as well. Benvenuto Cellini became famous for his gems and described the method of their manufacture in his treatise on the goldsmith's craft. In London there is no example of

Cellini's art as a goldsmith, although the famous Canning Jewel (Pl. XXII (c)) in the Victoria and Albert Museum was at one time ascribed to him.¹ The new manner rapidly spread to France and Southern Germany, where, at Augsburg and Munich, prolific centres of the jeweller's art were established. Dürer and Holbein, too, made many designs for jewels. In England, moreover, the taste for personal adornment became very luxurious, although its maturity was late in coming. The age of Elizabeth brought jewellery into the foremost rank of fashion, and new types were added to the old. Miniatures were worn like pendants in jewelled mounts ; watches were elaborately set in gold cases studded with gems, and little enamelled books of devotion hung from ladies' girdles.² In the British Museum is a famous enamelled 'girdle-book' said to have belonged to Queen Elizabeth. In the Victoria and Albert Museum is a more elaborate and very famous jewelled and enamelled Book-cover, once said to be the work of Cellini, but now considered of Southern German origin of the sixteenth century.

During the late fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, there was a revival of the classic art of gem engraving. The cameo engraver, Jean de Fontenay, was sent for by Queen Elizabeth from France : also Coldoré, the cutter to Henri

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² Watches occasionally hung from the girdle, as in the portrait of Queen Elizabeth in the National Portrait Gallery. Pomanders (*Pomme d'ambre* ; a ball perfumed with various scented substances contained in an open framework of gold set with jewels) were also fashioned as *bibelots* to suspend from the waist-band. Sometimes the pomanders were very elaborate, and one, carried by Catherine Howard, contained a clock.

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IV, who made several portraits for the Queen and possibly the 'Barbor Jewel' in the Victoria and Albert Museum.

Crystal engraving was also much in favour. One of the chief of its exponents was Valerio Belli of Vicenza, to whom the famous Soltikoff Cross and its companion Candlesticks, in the Victoria and Albert Museum, are attributed.

The German gold- and silversmiths, of the sixteenth century, became famous for their skill in designing plate and objects of the table, especially for their standing cups, not only in metal, but in various materials such as nautilus shell, cocoanuts and ostrich eggs. Occasional pieces of Ming porcelain found their way to Europe at this time and were mounted in silver in European fashion. But, towards the end of the century, more elaborate designs were adopted by the silversmiths and plate became a recognized manifestation of Renaissance art.

The finest wedding cups were those of South Germany. In the British Museum (Franks Bequest) there is a German cup which, when inverted, reveals the form of a woman holding a small revolving hemispherical cup above her head. It is supposed that at a wedding feast both parts were filled, and that the bridegroom, drinking from the larger cup, inverted it and offered the smaller to his bride.

In South Germany, one city vied with another in the production of handsome plate and objects were stamped with the city mark, such as the pine-cone of Augsburg and the capital North of Nuremberg. At the same time, the master who had made the piece impressed his private mark, usually his own initials.

At Nuremberg it was the custom that every apprentice should make three masterpieces before being admitted as a master, and of these the most important was the Ackleibecher or Columbine-Cup.¹ This custom continued until

¹ So called from its lobed shape, suggesting the form of a Columbine.

the eighteenth century, but during the Renaissance period it was at its height and many such cups exist. In the British Museum is a well-known masterpiece of the Nuremberg school, often wrongly named the Cellini Cup, and in the Victoria and Albert Museum there are two fine examples by Martin Rehlein and Christopher Jamnitzer.

One of the principal tests for the skill of the metal-worker was the fashioning of cases for clocks and watches, the mechanism of which in the sixteenth century reached a high standard of elaboration. Germany was the chief source for the production of intricate time-pieces and their clock-makers travelled over Europe on commissions for foreign courts. One Nicholas Cratzer was invited to England by Wolsey and made the great astronomical clock at Hampton Court which, as well as showing every phase of the moon, position of the sun and sign of the Zodiac, tells the hour of high water at London Bridge. In the British Museum stands the replica in miniature of the Strasbourg clock, which at the hour displays a procession of revolving figures. Watches in the sixteenth century were comparatively rare and very few in the British Museum can be said to date before 1600.

(c) IRONWORK

Despite the esteem in which all the arts were held in Italy during the Renaissance, ironwork at the early stages of the movement was comparatively neglected and bronze was the metal favoured for its decorative value. It received most recognition in Venice where the quatrefoil used for window gratings, screens, balconies and balustrades, was the most usual design.

In the Renaissance era, ironwork, although not widely developed as a significant branch of the arts, was used of necessity in connexion with architecture. Many of the palaces had on their façades lanterns (*fanali*), banner-

holders or horse-rings, mostly in wrought iron. The *fanali* and banner-holders were the prerogative of noble families or citizens of great wealth and influence, and are, consequently, rare. The Victoria and Albert Museum is fortunate in possessing three *fanali* of a simple and elegant design, equal in quality to those which are *in situ* at Lucca, Perugia, Siena and Florence.¹

Ironwork, moreover, was used for domestic purposes. In *piazze* and the courtyards of houses, well-heads were surmounted by wrought-iron arches, supporting the pulley ; door knockers, usually in the shape of two conjoined dolphins, heightened the dignity of palace gates ; and the door-handles of plainer dwellings were often in wrought iron in the simple form of a ring or oval (a group is exhibited in the Victoria and Albert Museum). Locksmiths' work, however, was strangely undeveloped, and Italian locks and keys were never decorated in the sumptuous fashion that became their lot in Germany and France.²

For the interior of houses and palaces, ironwork was used for many purposes. Before the close of the sixteenth century, huge gilded lanterns stood on the staircases in the corridors of palaces ; candlesticks in the form of brackets in wrought iron were fixed to the walls and, in Venice, bell-pulls were made in elaborate iron tracery. Rooms, and especially churches, were lighted by large candlesticks standing on the ground, such as the well-known example in the Victoria and Albert Museum will typify. A nobleman's study, moreover, offered many opportunities to the iron-workers. His desk had, often, two candle-brackets attached ; his arm-chair was frequently partly made of metal and, if his pursuits were scientific, a

¹ On the Strozzi Palace at Florence, Niccolò Grosso, Il Caparro, executed some famous lanterns, vividly praised by Vasari.

² An exception is the large lock at the Victoria and Albert Museum which is etched with the Papal Insignia.

metal astrolabe hung from the ceiling.¹ Bedsteads, too, were often largely made in metal owing to the danger of the wood's proximity to the open hearth. Houses, in Renaissance Italy, were warmed by braziers on which a chafing dish of burning coals was rested. A well-known tripod of the fourteenth century, and several braziers of the later epoch, are in the Victoria and Albert Museum.

In Germany, the production of ironwork was richer than in Italy, but it did not reach maturity until the seventeenth century, when it became emphatically the people's art.

France, to whom the art of ironwork was one of her '*plus belles gloires*', was renowned for her skilful craftsmen early in the fifteenth century, and certain of the early methods were termed in Italy '*alla Francese*'. Like the Germans, French workmen exploited their skill on work which would heighten their domestic comfort, and with them, locks, keys, bolts, door-knockers, coffers, caskets and screens were brought to perfection. Under the reign of the Valois, Italian influence percolated into France, and well-heads, surmounted by a kind of canopy in wrought iron, became the fashion. Under Louis XI a grim use for iron was found, and at Plessis three forges were at work in making iron cages for prisoners, in one of which the Bishop of Verdun was imprisoned for fourteen years.²

With Henri II less macabre schemes were evolved and the art of the locksmith was again employed upon beautifying the gilt keys which all the King's courtiers and favourites had to hang from their girdle. A famous key which admitted into the apartments of Henri II is the so-called 'Strozzi key' in the Victoria and Albert Museum.³ The

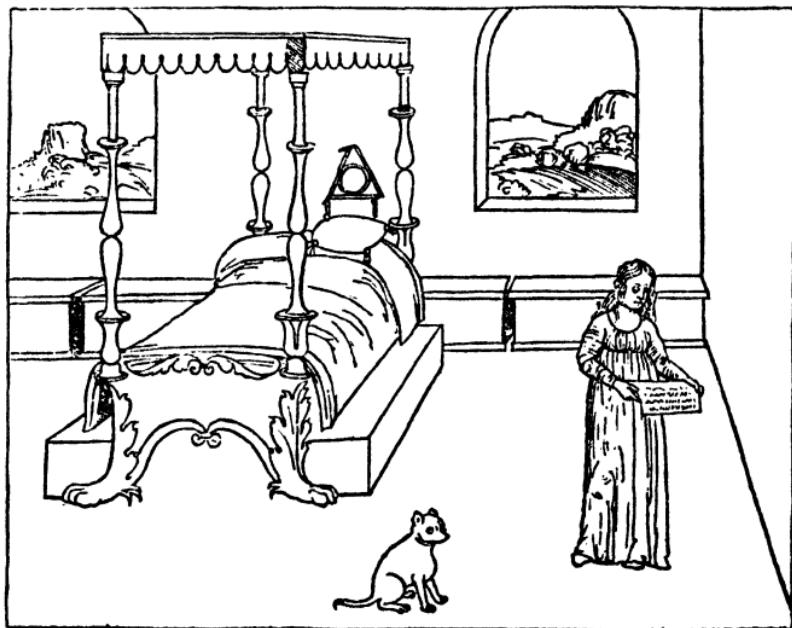
¹ Examples of astrolabes are to be found in the British Museum.

² An example of such a cage is shown at Loches, and a drawing of it is in the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris.

³ It was bought some years ago for the enormous sum of £1,200 and was bequeathed to the Museum by Mr. David Currey.

reason for this efflorescence of elaborate locks and keys in France during the Renaissance was, perhaps, the system which prevailed in France for four centuries of setting apprentices a task of making a lock and key to admit them to the rank of master. The mechanism of their *chefs d'œuvre* was often so elaborate that it took the apprentice two years to make. The Victoria and Albert Museum possesses several examples of the work of these candidates for the lock-master's excellence, and a specimen of great value is the lock signed Gaspar J. Mazelin, 1649.

(d) FURNITURE
A RENAISSANCE BEDROOM



POLIA IN HER ROOM READING A LOVE LETTER
From the Aldine *Hypnerotomachia*, 1499

Italian furniture of the Renaissance period was mainly architectural in design, the cornices, pediments and pilasters of architecture being applied to domestic decoration. The

great difference between the Early Renaissance furniture of Italy and that of the Northern countries was the substitution of walnut for oak and the consequent opportunity for elaborate wood carving. But in the most characteristic piece of Italian furniture, the *Cassone*¹ (coffer), the wood was usually concealed beneath a decoration of paint, gilt and ornamental plaster-work. At times, this ornamentation reached a very high standard and such men as Masaccio and Botticelli did not scorn to paint *cassoni* panels.² Other methods of decoration were Certosina Work (inlay of ivory in wood); Intarsia Work (inlay of one wood in another in the form of a veneer) and Pietra Dura (ornamental stonework in high relief). An elaborate object of furniture of the Italian Renaissance period was the *Credenza*, an imposing dresser, treated architecturally with cornices, pilasters and arches. Other characteristic pieces were the Sgabello (high-backed stool); Seggiola (the X-shaped chair often decorated with a coat-of-arms) and the Cassapanca, a *cassone* provided with a back and arms.

In France, the furniture-makers of the early Renaissance period clung to the skirts of the Gothic tradition, allowing the Italian influence to affect matters of decoration, rather than those of form. The actual structure did not change till about the mid-sixteenth century, under the later Valois, when a closer resemblance to Italian high Renaissance furniture was brought about. Walnut became the principal medium of furniture-making and carving in high relief was the favourite decorative form. The *Dressoir* (sideboard), perhaps the most typical piece of French

¹ Three very highly gilded *cassoni* are in the Victoria and Albert Museum. Fine examples of *cassoni* decorated with carving and *gesso duro* (ornamental plaster-work) are in the Salting Bequest and in the main collection of furniture.

² The two late panels of Botticelli in the National Gallery, 'The Miracles of S. Zenobius', are thought to have been painted for a *cassone*.

Renaissance furniture, received the architectural treatment of Italian work and the pilasters and columns were used in conjunction with grotesque classical forms (satyrs ; masks, scrolls, monsters). Such fantastic caprices are chiefly associated with the output of the school of Hughes Sambin of Dijon, whilst a quieter style found favour in the North (the *Île de France* or Paris region) with the work of the famous Du Cerceau. Sambin followed his Italian models in a predilection for satyrs and monsters carved in very high relief, whilst du Cerceau copied the long-limbed gods and goddesses of Jean Goujon who, himself, is supposed to have designed the furniture for the Château of Anet.

Examples of Renaissance *Armoires* or *Dressoirs* are to be found in the Wallace Collection (notably the example from the School of Lyons carved with a figure of Hecate and two other examples from Central France with mythological reliefs showing the influence of Jean Goujon), and in the Victoria and Albert Museum (Salting Bequest). In the main collection of the museum is an oak door, probably from the Château of Anet, bearing the interlaced crescents of Diane de Poitiers. The walnut sideboard in the Salting Bequest is a well-known piece, having on one door the peculiarity of a carved representation of the Laocoön and on the other the same subject in reverse.

In Spain, the Renaissance influence revealed a greater value attached to decoration, but the Spanish national dignity was maintained at the expense of Italian frivolity. The Renaissance *Vargas* or *Vargueño* (a cabinet with a falling front), the stand-by of the Spanish home, shows finely wrought ironwork or pierced iron plaques on the outer doors which, when opened, often reveal a brilliantly painted interior. The ancient treatment of *Guadameciles* (stamped and painted leather) was in the sixteenth century highly developed and much use was made of it in conjunction with gilt and paint.

The German and Flemish craftsmen excelled in the production of fine marquetry. In the Victoria and Albert Museum is an inlaid Cabinet of Pinewood, on the base of which the Tudor rose alternates with the Portcullis, showing that the piece was probably made in England for a member of the royal house, perhaps Queen Elizabeth, by a craftsman from South Germany.

(e) MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS

The musical life of the Renaissance is nowhere better reflected than in the pictures of the period, but the actual instruments themselves have for the most part vanished through the extreme fragility of their nature. London, therefore, is particularly fortunate in possessing an interesting collection of old instruments at the Victoria and Albert Museum, where the earliest exhibited specimen is a *Clavicembalo* (harpsichord) made by Gieronimo di Bologna and dated 1521.¹

The principal centres of the manufacture of fine instruments in Italy were Rome, Bologna, Venice and Milan, where the Milanese family of Rossi were makers of keyboard instruments of which two are in the Victoria and Albert Museum. In Venice, the maker *Spinetti* possibly gave his name to the instrument which we call a Spinet.²

A similar instrument was the Virginal of which a very ornate example decorated with Muranese glass is in the Victoria and Albert Museum. A Spinet in the same collection, which belonged to Queen Elizabeth, has the customary projecting keyboard, whereas in another example, made by

¹ A still earlier instrument is an upright Virginal, dating to the mid-fifteenth century, in the Donaldson Collection at the Royal College of Music, to which admission is obtainable on application.

² Another suggestion is that the name is derived from *spina*, a thorn, referring to the plectra, generally of crow quill, by which the strings were plucked.

a member of the celebrated Rossi family of Milan, the keyboard is recessed : an innovation credited to these makers.

String instruments, such as the lute, theorb and *chitarone*, precede keyboard instruments, but no examples earlier than the late sixteenth century are to be found in the Victoria and Albert Museum.

Instruments played with a bow, such as those of the Viol family, and the Violin, have a common ancestry and were later elaborated by Duifoprugcar and Gasparo da Salo in the sixteenth century. A huge Double-Bass and a *Viola da Gamba* by the latter maker are in the Victoria and Albert Museum. The *Viola da Gamba* (large viol which rests between the legs) together with the smaller-sized *Viola Piccola* and *Viola d'Amore* are the prototypes of the modern violoncello and violin.

The Guitar, which, like the lute, probably originated from the Greek *citara*, was well known in the Middle Ages and continued in favour throughout the Renaissance epoch.

Though not dating to our period, fine specimens of seventeenth and eighteenth-century lutes and guitars are to be seen in the Victoria and Albert Museum, as well as examples of such instruments as the *viola di Bardone* (baritone viol), *vielle* (hurdy-gurdy)¹, dulcimer, harp, *tromba marina*, clavichord, virginals, wind-instruments and the portable organ.

Most of these instruments gave opportunity for elaborate embellishment in paint or inlay and many of them have been broken up for the sake of their painted decoration.

(f) GLASS

(i) *Stained Glass*

This artistic medium was one of the glories of the Middle Ages, when it formed part of the essential architectural

¹ The instrument of the troubadours throughout the Middle Ages. It was revived with great popularity in the eighteenth century.

structure of churches, and lightened the dim solemnity of a Gothic interior by its flashing rubies and shimmering sapphires. But with the approach of the classical revival, the grandeur of stained glass diminished, and its strictly ecclesiastical uses were secularized for the decoration of palaces, guilds and civic buildings.

In the fifteenth century, glass showed a tendency to become paler in colour; the shading of figures and draperies grew more elaborate and a use of heraldry, especially in Germany at Cologne, Strasbourg and Nuremberg, and in Switzerland, was developed.¹ In the sixteenth century, methods changed, and the 'coated blue' began to appear, with the use of red enamel for the flesh tints. The shadows, too, were no longer produced with enamel brown, but with deeper tints of various colours. In the Victoria and Albert Museum, in the darkened corridors specially arranged for stained glass, several examples from our period can be studied, of which the most notable are an Italian window of the 'Adoration of the Magi', dated 1516; a French window of the 'Last Supper', dated 1542; and the famous 'Ashridge Glass' from the Rhine.²

In the Church of St. Margaret, Westminster, is the celebrated East Window of the Crucifixion, made in Holland at the very end of the fifteenth century. It was planned to present the window to Henry VII in commemoration of the marriage of his elder son, Prince Arthur, with Katherine of Aragon. The prospective bride and bridegroom appear in the window in the right and left lower lights.

¹ Fine examples of heraldic glass in the Victoria and Albert Museum are the panels representing Maximilian, Mary of Burgundy, Philippe le Bel, and Joanna the Mad.

² Most of the panels come from the Abbey of Steinfeld. The glass was brought to England early in the nineteenth century and was set up in Ashridge in 1831. The most popular light is that representing Tobit and his wife in bed, with the dog curled up at their feet.

(ii) *Domestic Glass*

The finest glass of the Renaissance era was that produced in Venice, where the industry, the origins of which are obscure, had been encouraged since the twelfth century. The capture of Constantinople in the early years of the twelfth century gave an added stimulus to the manufacture, and during the course of the century glass was made at Murano, l'Altare, Treviso, Mantua, Bologna and other Italian cities. The secret of the manufacture was very jealously guarded but, from time to time, workers escaped at the risk of their lives and carried their knowledge to various foreign cities.

Venetian glass was the tradition on which all other glass manufacture was based and every form of light, hard glass ('soda glass') was later styled '*à la façon de Venise*'. The principal factory was at Murano, an island near Venice, where the workers found the silica in the form of small pebbles in the river-beds of Alpine Italy.

The art of enamelled glass came from the East, but not much use was made of this form of decoration before the fifteenth century. Even then enamelling was generally limited to the thicker *tazze* and bowls, since the extreme fragility of the metal would not bear the heat of the enamel furnace. Cutting on the wheel was also a difficult process, and after 1500 the art of diamond engraving was developed.

From the thirteenth to the sixteenth centuries Venice was renowned for her splendid glass manufacture; even the mere journeymen of Murano were given a place above the master-workers of other centres, and people used to travel to Venice especially to see examples of the glass-blowers' art. In the late fifteenth century, Beatrice d'Este, in a letter to a friend, tells how she and her suite, when visiting Venice, saw at the booths of the Piazza, decked for a feast-day, a display of glass so magnificent that 'we were absolutely in transports over it'.

Carried away by the caprices of their own imagination, the Venetians blew their glass into a variety of weird forms and a visitor to Murano at the end of the fifteenth century speaks of the ' animals of every sort ' that were made here. The fame of their manufacture was not long in spreading and during the sixteenth century a considerable amount of glass was exported. At the end of the century the art had reached England. Harrison, in his *England*, writes that ' noblemen's houses contained fine Venetian glass of all forms, which they preferred to gold and silver vessels since owing to their "plentifulness" these began to be "loathed" by the gentry'. In England, too, the actual manufacture of glass was encouraged and before the sixteenth century had run its course, glass *à la façon de Venise* was being made at the Crutched Friars by Iacomo Verzellini and his assistants.

France was one of the first countries to catch the Italian taste for glass. Before the Renaissance, their only manufacture was the simple *verre de fougère* fused with burnt ferns. But in the fifteenth century escaped artisans from Murano found their way to France and there divulged the Venetian secret. René d'Anjou, as usual receptive in matters of culture, encouraged the art and directed an industry of enamelled glass by a maker from l'Altare. In the early sixteenth century glass was made at Lyons *à la façon de Venise*. Towards the end of the century, workers in France were so numerous and the prices of their glass so low that Palissy declared that glass vessels were hawked about the streets by vendors of scrap-iron. Under Henri II, glass was made at Saint-Germain, but the venture did not prove a success, though in the early years of the seventeenth century Henri IV encouraged Italians to come over to France and direct the glass-houses, which he had started in Paris and at Nevers.

Spain supported three principal centres of glass manu-

facture (Almería, Barcelona, and, in the eighteenth century, La Granja). At Almería, a Spanish-Moorish glass had been made since the twelfth century, but at Barcelona, where glass had been made since the fourteenth century, the industry became chiefly concentrated on the manufacture of *verre à la façon de Venise*, made in the fifteenth century by workers from Murano. The factory at La Granja was not started until the early eighteenth century.

In Germany, the principal centres of glass-making were Hesse and Bohemia, Thuringia, Saxony and Silesia. From the Middle Ages a coarse kind of 'potash glass' had been made in the various parts of Germany, but in the sixteenth century the Venetians came to Bohemia in search of gems and taught the more refined method of soda-glass.¹

The chief feature of German glass does not lie in the shape of the vessels as with Venetian glass, nor in the quality of the metal as with our eighteenth-century English 'flint' glass, but in the means of decoration. The Germans loved to engrave upon their glass—an art to which *Waldglas* was easily adapted—and engraving on glass with the diamond dates probably to the mid-sixteenth century. Painting with enamel colours on glass (*Kunstglas*) was also suited to the German metal and there was much resort to this method of decoration in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Another favourite traditional decoration was that of Prunts: seals of molten glass applied to the surface of the vessel in the course of its manufacture.

In the Low Countries the German technique was greatly followed and, later, the Venetian was adopted. In mid-

¹ Potash-glass, unlike the soda-glass of Venice, was an inland technique, dependent on forests for its flux and fuel—hehce the name *Waldglas*. The industry became widespread in the Middle Ages. A German drawing in the British Museum shows fifteenth-century glass-makers at work, digging for the ingredients in a forest and carrying off their material in sacks to the kilns.

sixteenth century, Muranese workers came to Antwerp and this city, with Liége and Brussels, became a prosperous centre of the glass-making industry. The forms employed were usually imitations of the German and Venetian styles and the more national types, such as the 'Flute Glass', air-twists, and decoration in stipple, date to later periods of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

Examples of all these various styles and manufactures of glass can be seen in the Victoria and Albert Museum and the British Museum.

(g) TEXTILES

(i) *Brocades and Damasks*

Sicily anticipated Italy in the weaving of fine silks and gold brocades and a textile industry was conducted there as early as the tenth century, following on the Mohammedan Conquest. But the Sicilian work of that period cannot be distinguished from that contemporaneously woven in Egypt and Syria, since the Fatimite Califfs, who were overlords of Sicily as well as of Egypt and Syria, which they conquered in A.D. 969, saw to it that all work executed under their direction was impregnated with the Oriental style. The earliest textile which can definitely be assigned to a Sicilian loom is the celebrated Imperial Mantle in the Treasury at Vienna, on which the inscription records that it was made at Palermo in the year 528 of the Hegira (i.e. 1134).

The conquest of Sicily by Charles of Anjou in 1266 drove many of the weavers to Italy, especially to Lucca. There the characteristic Byzantine motives—animals and birds, confronted, often in roundels—were gradually modified into a characteristic Lucchese design of which the basis consists of ogival divisioning with serrated leaf and floral forms and intertwining vine stalks.

After the capture of Lucca by the Florentines in 1315, many of the weavers found their way to Florence which, with Venice, Genoa and Milan, became the chief centres of Italian weaving. There the designs became almost completely Italianized and the old Byzantine animal subjects were forgotten in favour of the so-called Artichoke, Mulberry Tree, or Pomegranate designs and other floral forms.

In the fifteenth century Italian weaving became a splendid industry, and farmers were compelled by a law of 1444 to plant fifty mulberry trees, at the rate of five trees a year, to encourage the silk manufacture. The richness of the industry finds a due reflection in the myriad brocades and damasks portrayed in *Quattrocento* painting.

The typical designs of Italian fifteenth century textiles take various forms ; very often the design consists of horizontal rows of ogee shape filled in with a floral pattern, and sometimes it was entirely composed of serrated leaves. In the later work, the curving lines of the pattern were sometimes formed by peacocks' feathers tied together by ribbons. But whatever the composition might be, the colour was always of a magnificence proportionate to the *bravura* of the design.

In the sixteenth century the 'pomegranate' waned in favour and its place was taken by the vase as the characteristic pattern. Gradually the framework of the design was loosened and the rigid symmetry of the composition neglected. Materials, moreover, were changed, and, at Genoa and Venice, silks and brocades gave way to velvet, on which a design was cut (*ciselé*) out of the fabric in fine lines, leaving a very delicate tracery on the deep pile of the velvet.

Throughout the Renaissance, Italy remained supreme in the art of weaving, although the Low Countries conducted a fair industry in fine materials. In France, too, Lyons

became an all-important centre, but no great originality was there encouraged and neither French nor Flemish weavers could fail to submit to the Italian influence.

All the various phases of the art of weaving and the development of each characteristic design can be studied in the Textile Department of the Victoria and Albert Museum.

(ii) Embroideries

Italy was as famous for her skilled embroiderers as for her weavers, and painters were called upon to provide designs for vestments, clothes and hangings. For example, Squarcione is described in a document of 1423 as a 'tailor and embroiderer'; Pollaiuolo is known to have made drawings for vestments which took many years to carry out; and Torrigiani has been cited as the designer of the famous Stonyhurst Cope.¹

The costly vestments of Church dignitaries during the Renaissance era provided ample opportunity to the embroiderer and weaver. Such rich vestments were faithfully represented by Gentile Bellini, in his scenes of Venetian pageants and processions, and by Giovanni Bellini, in such a portrait as that of the Doge Loredano in the National Gallery.

Whereas, in England, numbers of magnificently embroidered vestments were, at the Reformation, being converted into bed and table-coverings and wall-hangings, in Italy, Spain and Portugal a very high standard of ecclesiastical embroidery was maintained. The colour scheme was generally bright and occasionally pigments were painted on the material in order to produce effects of shading and relief. The great care which was taken of these vestments—copes, chasubles, albs, dalmatics and tunicles—has

¹ Exhibition of English Medieval Art, 1930; Italian Exhibition, 1930.

resulted in their preservation in the Victoria and Albert Museum. For examples of civil costumes, which were treated with less respect, one has to go mainly to paintings, as there are no actual examples of the period in our London Museums. Renaissance fashions, however, were very sumptuous and their extravagance excited the ire of Savonarola who reproached the Florentine nuns for flattering the idle taste of women by making 'gold lace' for great ladies.

(iii) *Lace*

Venetian point-lace did not achieve its delicate intricacy until the seventeenth century, but its origin can be traced to the Renaissance period in the *Punto Tagliato* (cut work); *Punto Tirato* (drawn-thread work); and the *Reticella* (a development of *Punto Tirato*). Up to the end of the sixteenth century, designs were geometric in character and stiff and wiry in texture, well suited to the enormous ruffs of the period. Brantôme records that owing to the size of her ruff 'la Reine Margot' was obliged to use a spoon with a handle 2 feet long with which to ladle her soup. Henri III, too, was so anxious that his lace collars and cuffs should not be torn in the washing, that he is said to have ironed them himself.

Punto Ricamato a Maglia Quadra or *Lacis*, a method in which the pattern is darned upon a hand-made net of a square mesh, was much used for altar frontals, bed-curtains, and coverlets. Many examples of these are in the Victoria and Albert Museum. This work became a fashionable pastime, and Catherine de' Medici, when in France, sent for Vinciolo, a celebrated designer, whose pattern-books were published and greatly used. Copies of these and the pattern-books of Vecellio and Matteo Pagani are in the Victoria and Albert Museum.

(iv) *Tapestries*

The art of tapestry weaving was predominant in the Middle Ages, and important centres were formed at Angers, Beaune, Tournai and Arras. But as the medieval tradition merged into the Renaissance, a new centre arose at Brussels. The early history of tapestry-weaving at Brussels is obscure, but the first landmark is the commission by Philippe le Bon for a set of tapestries from a Brussels weaver in 1466.¹ A testimony to the excellence of Brussels weaving lies in the fact that in Italy there were no workers of sufficient distinction to execute the tapestries for the Sistine Chapel, and Raphael's designs were sent to Brussels for their translation into fabric by Pieter van Aelst and his assistants. Two weavers (Rost and Karcher) were sent from the Low Countries to Italy to work for the Duke of Ferrara. It is thought that one of these executed the tapestry of Cupids playing among Fruit-Trees in the Victoria and Albert Museum (Salting Bequest). Famous among early Renaissance tapestries are the *I Trionfi* Series (The Triumphs of Love, Chastity, Death, Fame, Time and Divinity, taken from Petrarch's last poem to Laura). Numbers 2, 3 and 4 (Chastity, Death and Fame) of one set of this series are in the Victoria and Albert Museum, and numbers 3, 4, 5 (Death, Fame and Time) are in the Great Watching Chamber at Hampton Court.

Most celebrated of all Renaissance tapestries are the 'Acts of the Apostles', designed by Raphael.² They revolutionized the art of tapestry design and simplified the crowded scenes of the medieval tradition, with the sur-

¹ Philippe le Bon, in his founding of the Order of the Golden Fleece, paid a tribute to wool as being the staple industry of the Low Countries and thereby strengthened the Flemish tradition of weaving.

² For Raphael's 'cartoons see page 57.

rounding *mille fiori* and animals and birds, into an ordered composition. As tapestry designs adopted more and more the characteristics of paintings, borders, hitherto unimportant, became more significant and served as a frame to the picture. The subjects, moreover, lost their continuous representation and became a united whole. Raphael's pupils, Giulio Romano and Bernardo van Orley, carried on his tradition of tapestry-designing. The most famous series by Romano, woven under Wilhelm Panne-maker, is the History of Abraham, a set of which is in the Great Hall at Hampton Court. Other famous series are Giulio Romano's History of Scipio, from Livy's History of Rome, and the Hunts of Maximilian by Bernardo van Orley.

At Hampton Court, in the Haunted Gallery, is a famous set of Flemish tapestries of the early sixteenth century, representing the history of Dido and Aeneas.

(v) *Carpets*

The weaving of fine fabric was widely practised by the Moors in Spain, and carpets are said to have been introduced into England by Eleanor of Castile in 1255. The earliest extant Spanish carpets were made for members of the Castilian aristocracy in the mid-fifteenth century. In the Victoria and Albert Museum are some fine examples of sixteenth-century Spanish carpets.

Many Spanish carpets followed closely Eastern patterns (notably Moorish tile-work) as well as contemporary textile designs, and bright colours—blues, yellows and greens—were much in favour. The Spanish method of carpet-making was often to tie the knot on a single warp thread, thus allowing the lines to run freely in any direction.

The earliest known English-made carpet, 1570, is at Gorhambury, near St. Albans.

(h) IVORIES

These can find but little place in a study of the Renaissance, since the art of ivory-carving, which had flourished in the Middle Ages, declined markedly during the Renaissance period. In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries wood was generally preferred to ivory as a medium for carving, although in the last part of the latter century a short revival of the art occurred.

The rarity of ivory carvings during the early Renaissance was, perhaps, largely due to the scarcity of material, since less ivory was imported into France than hitherto—and, when it once more came into favour, the old tradition of ivory had been left behind by the stream of Time.

Among the few Italian carvers in ivory of the fifteenth century the most notable was Baldassare Embriachi, who, with his followers, attracted considerable attention by the large altarpiece made for the Certosa at Pavia. Much of the work was done in bone, but ivory was also used. The figures were generally carved separately and then placed side by side in groups and mounted on a wooden foundation. This is the case with the Altarpiece of 63 panels in the Victoria and Albert Museum with scenes from the life of the Virgin and Christ. In the same Museum are a portion of another Altarpiece and two Triptychs of the school of the Embriachi (late fifteenth century), as well as various handsome Marriage Caskets.

Since Italian carvings of the sixteenth century are rare, perhaps owing to the predominant popularity of bronze plaquettes and statuettes, the Victoria and Albert Museum is fortunate in possessing an ivory statuette of Diana as well as a statuette of the Virgin and Child of the French school (end of sixteenth century). In the Victoria and Albert Museum are also a few sixteenth-century Combs, Powder-Flasks and Beads, the last having once formed

part of Chaplets or Rosaries. Such '*memento mori*' are often carved with death's heads and other similar devices. These ivories are either Flemish or Northern French.

In Germany, the ivory-carvers often had resort to subjects taken from contemporary engravings. Carvings in wood, however, had greater favour than those in ivory. In Spain and Portugal numerous ivory statuettes and reliefs were produced for the churches, but few were of great merit. Ivory, none the less, was to come once more into favour as a medium for the carver's art, in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, when the spirit of Baroque and Rococo tended to apply its new embellishment to forgotten fashions.

CONCLUSION

THE varied forms of art which this book takes into consideration may seem a strange assortment to the casual reader. But although they differ so greatly in date and country, size and significance, the Renascent arts are closely related one to another and have the compositional unity of a string of graded pearls.

The desire for art in the fifteenth century had become so concentrated, and its expression was so far-reaching and overwhelming, that we have called it a Re-birth. But, in truth, a similar feeling, in a less ardent form, is ever present in the human mind, and there has never been an age in which the regions of the arts have remained entirely unexplored. Even to-day, when material considerations seem predominant, excellence is still prized and the word 'artist', even when applied to a cook, a gardener, a lawn-tennis player or a racing motorist, is still a term of the highest praise.

It is still, indeed, a question whether, in fulfilment of the fated repetition of history, this age of transition in which we now live may be another troubled epoch about to give birth to a fresh and no less glamorous Renaissance. At present, we are groping our way along some strange, ill-lighted corridor, the destination of which no person has yet seen. But, merely because the way is dark, there is no reason for panic and, though revolutions re-distil the very essence of society, our age may well be leading us to something new and very timely. At least our progress will be gladdened by manifestations of art in one form or another, because these are inevitable in any period, movement or country. Although the people who consciously enjoy works of art are comparatively few, those who actively

despise them are still fewer, and most people are conscious of some necessity to life, which they may define as wealth, speed, machines, or a mere thrill in living. But the feeling which disturbs them is, in reality, a desire for perfection or a craving for spiritual enrichment and, although the majority have no idea of the nature of the truth, the strange elixir which they need is art.

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